

# THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

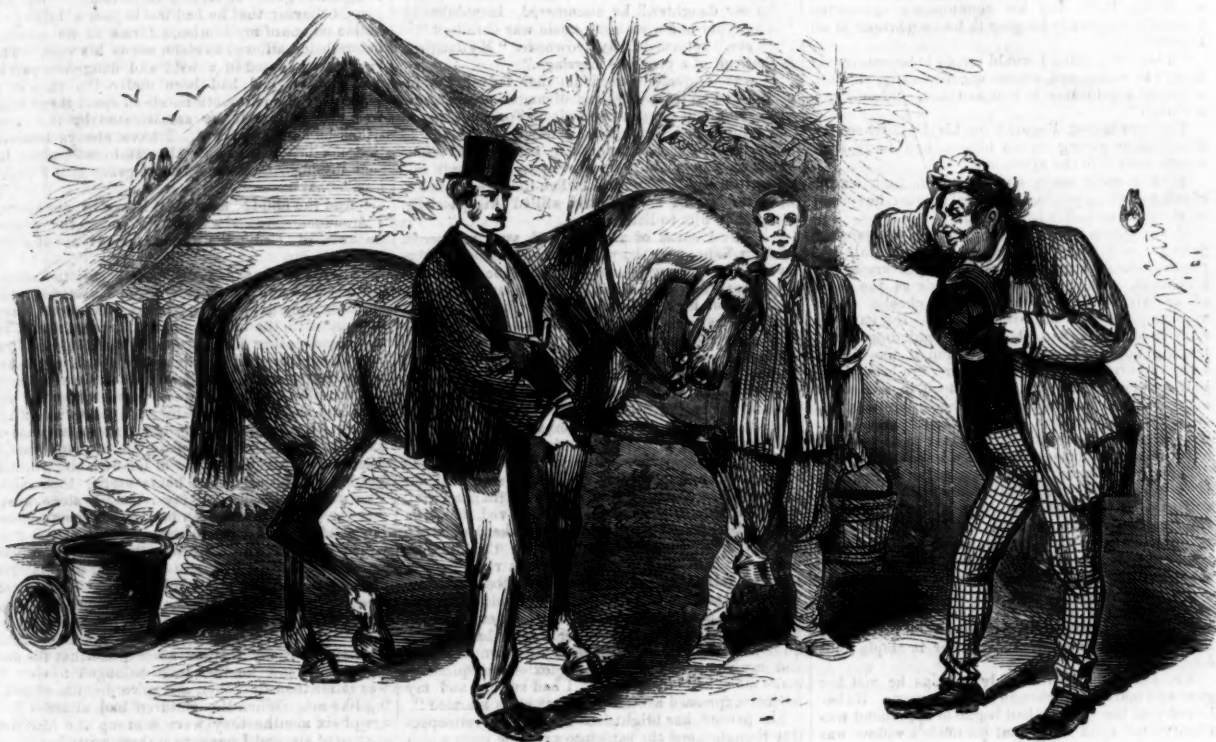
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[SOREL OVERTAKES SIR RICHARD.]

## THE GOLDEN HOPE.

By Mrs. H. Lewis.

### CHAPTER I.

REDWOODS.

Oh! how impatience gains upon the soul  
When the long-promised hour of joy draws near!  
How slow the tardy moments seem to roll!

Mrs. Tighe.

REDWOODS, the home for many generations of the Barons of Redwoods, looked more than ever grand and stately in the early sunlight of the pleasant summer morning. The mansion stood in the midst of a large and ancient grove, which was diversified with charming drives, numerous shaded walks, and adorned with a multitude of summer-houses and grottoes, in the midst of whose luxuriousness an almost arctic coolness reigned in the greatest heats of summer. A clear, perennial brook wound its shining way around the base of the hill crowned by the dwelling, and from the towers of Redwoods could be plainly seen the glittering waters of the English channel, which formed the eastern boundary of the estate.

With the decease of one of the noblest and best of all the barons of Redwoods, a year or more previous to the opening date of our story, this ancient and honourable title had become extinct. The present owner, the undisputed proprietor of all the fair domain, was the widow of the last baron. With little love for gay society, her mind a prey to brooding melancholy, for which even the death of her husband could not sufficiently account, Lady Redwoods sought peace amidst the shades of her magnificent home, her solitude cheered only by the presence and companionship of her late husband's favourite nephew, the only son of his best-loved sister.

The estate had been left by her husband to Lady Redwoods entirely without restriction. Making the most of his unaltered power, he had bequeathed her his entire estate, real and personal, but it had been his expressed wish that at her death his nephew

should succeed to the property. He had not exacted, and Lady Redwoods had not given any formal promise to that effect, but the sympathy and affection between the noble couple had been so entire that his lordship had never once doubted her compliance with his wishes. His nephew had spent many years at Redwoods, had been taught to consider himself its future owner, and Lady Redwoods had adopted him in her heart, in place of the son whom heaven had denied to her prayers.

Upon the morning we have indicated Mr. Andrew Forsythe, the nephew in question, was lounging in the dim old library, with a discontented expression upon his face. If æsthetic arrangements could impart happiness, his eyes would surely have been sparkling, and his lips must have worn a smile. The room was long and wide, lined with books, ornamented with busts and statues in niches, and furnished with every luxurious accessory to study or the enjoyment of literature. The lofty, groined ceiling, with its innumerable intersecting arches, all elaborately carved, looked as though it had been the united work of fairies and giants, and reminded one irresistibly of dim and solemn forest aisles. The thick carpet covering the floor resembled the heavy, elastic moss that grows in woody wilds. The deep oriel windows were radiant recesses of light, and through their clear crystal could be caught glimpses of lovely shaded nooks in the depths of the closely surrounding wood, and now and then might be seen at brief distances groups of tamed deer, browsing lazily on the rich herbage.

Mr. Andrew Forsythe was not insensible to all these things. Indeed, he had never before regarded them with the intensely appreciative glance he now bestowed upon them. Some light remark he had chanced to overhear but an hour before from one of his aunt's dependants had aroused in him a vivid feeling of his uncertain position at Redwoods, and of the fact that his uncle's widow had never yet formally declared him to be her heir, or even in private and familiar conversation assured him that he should yet be master where he was at present only a guest.

"Yes, as Kenneth said, she may marry again," he muttered, as he strode impatiently across the floor. "If she should, what would become of me? Redwoods would go to enrich the second husband and to endow the children of the second marriage. And I—reared in every luxury, accustomed to respectful homage as the future master of Redwoods—I, to whom the mere mention of labour is repugnant, and who chafe at the slightest hint of restraint, must go to work and earn my own living. I wonder my uncle did not foresee these probabilities. How could he have been so foolish and blind as to leave me absolutely dependant upon the caprices of a woman so young and beautiful as his widow? But I will never relinquish my present position without a struggle. It is too late for me to study a profession; I hate even the semblance of self-exertion, and can be happy and contented only as a gentleman of leisure. I must ascertain at once my aunt's intentions with regard to me!"

His handsome face gathered a resolute look under its clouded expression, and his keen black eyes glowed with unusual steadiness. He had a look of extreme youth, notwithstanding that his years had numbered five and twenty. His complexion was florid and had the freshness of boyhood, his slender figure was well knit and elastic, and his entire appearance was decidedly prepossessing. His partial relatives believed him to be the embodiment of every manly virtue, unmarred by any fault save that of an extremely passionate temper; but the steward who had frequently yielded to his demands for money when he had exceeded his liberal annual allowance from Lady Redwoods, and the servants whose office it was to wait upon the young gentleman, could have told of petty, revengeful acts and frequent displays of selfishness and tyranny that plainly enough evinced a narrow and ignoble soul on the part of Andrew Forsythe.

"Lady Redwoods is now in the prime of her beauty, and youthful enough to attract around her a crowd of admirers as soon as she opens her doors to society," resumed the young man, after an agitated pause. "She has no lovers now—that is, no avowed suitors

—but she cannot be without them long. She used to be fond of society, seeming to find in it some relief from the cankering melancholy that has always clouded her life since I have known her, and she has always been a recognized belle. It is not likely that she will long continue to immerse herself at Redwoode, especially as her year of mourning for my uncle has expired. I seem suddenly to have awakened from a dream to find myself standing upon the brink of a precipice. What am I to do?"

He approached one of the windows and looked out upon the lovely scene of woodland, gardens, sleeping lake, and shining brook, his eyes bright with avaricious light, and his countenance expressing faithfully his greedy longing to become master of all he beheld.

"There is nothing I would not do to become owner here!" he whispered, almost unconsciously, yet with a strange significance in look and tone. "Nothing—nothing!"

The words yet lingered on his lips, when the library door swung on its hinges, and Lady Redwoode came into the apartment.

With a quick start, and a sudden flush on his cheek, yet with a gentle, deferential manner, he sprang to meet her and offer her a chair.

Her ladyship was a stately, graceful woman, not yet eight-and-thirty years old. She was a tall, imperious, blonde beauty, perfect in her mature Saxon loveliness, with a complexion as fair as the petals of an African lily, except in her cheeks, which were tinged with a faint roseate flush. Her hair was silky in texture and golden in hue, reminding one of waving tresses of Indian corn, and it was drawn away in burnished ringlets from her pure brow, and gathered low at the back of her head in a classical coil. Neither stout nor slender, her figure was unequalled in its contour, and she carried herself with a queenly grace and majesty that was wont to exact admiration and homage from all who beheld her.

There was nothing in the expression of her face, or in her attire, to indicate that she had ever known sorrow. In her large blue eyes, of that pure, deep, intense blue sometimes seen in an Italian sky, and rarely elsewhere, was the radiance of a glorious and new-found happiness. Her proud, sweet face was all aglow with an ineffable joy, too deep for words, and a tender smile on her lips imparted a strange witchery to her loveliness. She had exchanged her heavy mourning garments for a robe of delicate lavender hue, which swept after her in ample folds like a comet train.

Mr. Forsythe grew deathly pale as he met her gaze and marked the change in her countenance. He believed that the blow he had begun to apprehend was about to fall upon him—that his uncle's widow was about to announce to him her intention to contract a second marriage.

A packet of letters and papers which her ladyship carried in her hand seemed to confirm his fears, and he permitted himself but a single glance at it, lest his change of countenance should betray his thoughts.

Lady Redwoode accepted the chair he mechanically proffered, and sank into its luxurious depths with a quiet grace, motioning him to take a seat near her.

"Your ladyship is looking strangely happy this morning," said Mr. Forsythe, with unconcealed bitterness. "Am I to congratulate some happy suitor upon having won you from your desolate widowhood?"

"Andrew," interrupted Lady Redwoode, reproachfully, the pink tint in her cheeks deepening to the most vivid flame colour, "I have changed my dress but my heart is still in mourning for my husband and I have no thought of ever marrying again. You, whose life has been spent at Redwoode, know how perfect was my happiness with your late uncle, and you, of all others, should have known that in my thoughts no other could take his place."

"I beg your pardon, Lady Redwoode," said Mr. Forsythe, with a delicious sense of relief. "I should have known better, yet I knew not what other interpretation to put upon your unusual manner—your almost bridal attire—your evident joy—"

He paused, confused by the penetrating glances of her ladyship, whose eyes had read correctly the fears he had entertained with regard to his succession as her heir, but she only smiled quietly and reassuringly, as she said:

"I shall not be unjust to you, Andrew, although I think you have not perfect confidence in me. I ought you to tell you a strange story—one that refers to a period in my life of which you know little. I scarcely know how to begin or how to say what I wish, and she held the packet in her hands with singular nervousness. "You must have remarked that I have always carefully avoided declaring you my heir. The truth is, Andrew, that there is one who has a stronger and better claim upon me."

"A stronger claim than I—Lord Redwoode's favourite nephew?" cried Mr. Forsythe, scarcely knowing what he said in his surprise.

"Yes," said Lady Redwoode, and there ran through her tones a sweet and joyous thrill that increased the young man's bewilderment. "Yes, Andrew, I may confess the truth at last to all the world. The one to whom I allude is bound to me by the sweetest and holiest ties of nature. She is my daughter."

Mr. Forsythe stared at his uncle's widow as if apprehensive that she had taken leave of her senses.

"Your daughter," he stammered, incredulously. "Why, your union with my uncle was childless."

"True," returned Lady Redwoode. "My daughter is the fruit of a previous marriage."

It was impossible to doubt her ladyship's sincerity, and an intense feeling of anger, chagrin, and disappointment swept over Andrew Forsythe's heart. Believing his dearest hopes baffled, expecting an immediate dismissal from his present luxurious home, he was about to give vent to his rage in imprecations and threatenings, when the sweet voice of Lady Redwoode momentarily stilled his passions, compelling him to listen.

"Before I speak of yourself and your prospects, Andrew," she said, "let me explain what must doubtless look very mysterious to you. You know that I was early left motherless, and that my father was an officer of high rank in the East India company. I was educated in England, and went out to join my father at the age of sixteen. When I arrived in India I found that my father had recently died, leaving me to the guardianship of my mother and his wife. My brother, who was much older than myself, was installed in my father's official position, and offered me a home and paternal care. His wife had been born in India, and was an entirely new native in complexion, while in manner she was supercilious and overbearing. It was said that her blood was not of unadmixed European origin; and that, while her father, with whom she had lived, had been an English officer of high rank, her mother had been a Hindoo girl of great beauty; yet with the faults of her race. I never knew whether the rumour were true or false, but my sister-in-law possessed remarkable powers of dissimulation, and otherwise resembled the race to whom her mother was said to belong. In a brief space of time I had become quite at home among my father's unknown relatives, and my youth and blood complexion conspired to make me a belle in society. I had suitors, and my brother expressed a wish to see me early married!"

She paused, her bright face clouded by retrospective thoughts, and she sank into a reverie from which she was aroused by Andrew Forsythe's uneasy movements.

"Pardon me, Andrew," she said, starting and collecting her thoughts. "I was speaking of my suitors. Among my lovers there was one who dared not openly avow his affection for me, but whom from the first I regarded with unusual interest. He was my brother's secretary. His father had been an ensign, I believe, in the army, and had died poor, leaving his son only an unstained and honourable name. Rolfe Avon, that was the secretary's name, was very handsome—perhaps I should say beautiful. He had the gentleness and grace of a delicate girl. His face was the face of a poet. Like my sister-in-law, he had been born in India, and his early associations had given a dreamy cast to his mind, and had infected him with a host of poetical superstitions that rendered him irresistibly fascinating to me. I was romantic, self-willed, and impetuous, an orphan, whose near kindred were too much absorbed in themselves to watch over and guide me. What wonder then that the tender, respectful glances of Rolfe Avon began to be valued beyond the openly expressed admiration of others? He found courage to tell me of his love, and I confessed that I was not indifferent to him. Fortune favoured us. Soon after our engagement my brother and his wife went away on a visit of several weeks' duration to the hills, and I with some difficulty procured permission to remain at home. During their absence Rolfe Avon and myself were privately married by a missionary at a little village church a few miles distant from my brother's residence. Every formality of the law was complied with and we returned home, determined to keep our secret awhile from my relatives."

"But why not have owned it?" asked Mr. Forsythe, interested in spite of himself.

"Because my brother was a stern, proud man," was the reply, "and he had other views for me. My fortune was in his hands, and Rolfe was poor. My husband would have braved him, but I dared not. I knew too well his hard, pitiless nature, and childishly feared that he would harm Rolfe. We succeeded so well in keeping our secret that for months it was not suspected. At length it became

necessary to confess the truth. There was a scene—a terrible scene," and her ladyship shuddered at the remembrance of it. "It was more than I could endure in the delicate state of my health. I fell into convulsions and was removed to my chamber. Rolfe was banished the house. I was ill for many weeks, and when I returned to life and consciousness I found myself a widow and a mother."

Mr. Forsythe repeated the words in wondering amazement.

"My husband had been sent away by my brother," said her ladyship, her voice trembling with indignant grief at the recollection. "He had gone, believing that he had but to pass a brief probation on one of my brother's farms as its steward before being allowed to claim me as his wife. The farm was situated in a wild and dangerous part of the country, and had been under the care of a native. Before a month had been spent there Rolfe was cruelly and foully assassinated by the agent whom he had supplanted. I have always believed that my brother foresaw this fatal result when he sent my husband there—heaven grant that I wrong him."

"And the child?" asked Mr. Forsythe, anxiously. A sudden spasm of anguish convulsed the perfect features of Lady Redwoode's face as she responded:

"I said I returned to consciousness only to find myself a widow and a mother. Alas! I was obliged to bury alike my grief and joy in my innumerable heart, and appear to the world a maiden. I was named by the foster-mother of my brother's wife. Conceiving that I had disgraced myself and blighted my future prospects by a clandestine union with one socially my inferior, my brother took care, during my illness, and after Rolfe's death, to deprive me of all proofs of my marriage. My child, at the moment of its birth, was given to my sister-in-law, and passed thereafter as the twin-sister of her own child, which had been born only a few hours earlier than mine. The nurse, myself, and my relatives alone knew that the child had not been born of the same mother. It was of no use for me to struggle against the iron will of my brother. Rolfe was dead and there was no one to aid me. I became apathetic, and yielded unquiescently to my brother when he insisted upon my re-entering society, knowing neither pain nor pleasure except when permitted to attend or caress the children. My relatives refused to tell me which was mine, but my instinct assured me that the one my sister-in-law fondled least belonged to me. It was fairer than the other, and gave promise of looking like me. When the children had attained the age of six months they were sent up the hills for change of air, and I never saw them again."

"They did not die?"

"No, but I married within a year of my husband's death. Lord Redwoode came to India on some temporary business, saw me, and loved me. When he asked me to marry him I told him that I did not love him, but that I esteemed him. He assured me that he preferred my esteem to the love of any other woman, and that the best love was founded upon such sober basis. I was disappointed and very unhappy with my relatives. Lord Redwoode had great influence with the government, and he promised to exert it to procure my brother a pension. This promise was not given as a bribe for my favour, but because he desired to make my brother's family dear to me happy and prosperous. My ambitious brother became eager for the marriage, and used all his authority to compel me to a favourable decision. The end of it was that I promised to become Lord Redwoode's wife. My chief motive in accepting him was to claim his protection for my child."

"And yet you never told him?"

"I dared not, Andrew. Before my marriage I was scarcely alone with his lordship. My brother threatened that if I betrayed my secret marriage he would destroy all proofs of it, and thus place me in the worst possible light before Lord Redwoode. I believed him capable of carrying out his threats. I knew that his object was to establish a bold upon me that might at some future time be of benefit to himself, and I dared not then defy or resist him. I knew too that he considered that clandestine unions disgraced which Lord Redwoode might not choose to overlook. So I acquiesced in all that he said, resolving to tell his lordship my story as soon as I became his wife. But by putting the confession off for a little while it was never done."

A look of keen regret passed like a shadow over her face, but it was easy to see from her expression of conscious rectitude that she did not reproach herself for her reticence.

"We were married, Andrew, and the hour came in which I proposed to tell my husband that I had been wedded before, and that a little child lived me the fruit of that unacknowledged union. Lord Redwoode was considerably older than myself, and pride—in-



domitable family pride—was the ruling quality of his nature. The very evening upon which I came to him, intending to unbuckle my heart and solicit his sympathy for my wrongs, he began to speak of his unblemished name, and to assure me how entirely worthy he believed me to be to share it. He said that he had always had a horror of designing women, and that he was exacting enough to be satisfied only with the fresh heart of a young girl. He declared widows to be his aversion. The confession I would have uttered was staved on my lips. Yet, Andrew, I summoned up sufficient courage to tell him my story, pretending it to be the history of a friend. His comments upon it when I had finished almost crushed me. He took the same views of the secret marriage that my brother had done. He could find in his heart no excuse for a young girl who had stooped from her station to marry a person whom he termed a hireling. He said that the deprivation of her child was a righteous punishment for overstepping the laws of caste, and that her brother in adopting the little one had acted with rare discretion and wisdom. What could I do, Andrew? I could not then confess that I was the heroine of that story. With my whole soul crying out for my child I yet forced a smile to my lips, and talked idly upon other subjects. Lord Redwoode speedily forgot the little narrative with which I had entertained him, and the subject never again came up between us. We soon afterwards came to England. Despite his foibles, Lord Redwoode was good and noble, and, as he had prophesied, my esteem for him in time ripened into love, and I was almost content.

As her ladyship uttered the last words Mr. Forsythe noticed in her blue eyes the yearning expression he had often noticed in them before, but for which he had always been puzzled to account.

"There was always one thing lacking," said the baroness, with a sigh. "I never saw my brother again, and I was not permitted to know if my child lived, or what was her name. But during all these years my heart has yearned for her with an intolerable longing. I have dreamed of her sleeping and waking. Many a time I have started from my slumbers by my husband's side, imagining that I felt the pressure of my darling's golden head upon my breast, or her little hand against my cheek. I have prayed that I might look into her sweet blue eyes, and hear her voice calling me mother. I could not bear that her innocent heart should yield its earliest love to my sister-in-law, and I dreaded to have her grow up under the influences of my brother's home. I confess I felt relieved when I casually heard of the death of my brother's wife four years since. I wrote to my brother, offering to receive the two girls into my home, educate them, and send them back to him in due time, but he refused. Since my husband's death scarcely a mail has left for India but has borne from me a pleading letter for my daughter's restoration. And, as you know, Andrew, I have been intending to visit India this year, although you could not have guessed my purpose. But my brother's heart has been at last softened by death. He died three months ago?"

"And has restored your child?" said Mr. Forsythe, huskily.

"He has sent me all necessary proofs of my first marriage, and of the birth of my daughter," and Lady Redwoode glanced at the packet she still held clasped in her hand. "He has also left the two girls to my guardianship. But even at the last his cruelty did not quite desert him. He lost all his property shortly before his death, and was obliged to leave his daughter, whom he seems to have idolized, almost penniless. Remembering his cruelty to me, he feared that I would revenge myself upon his child. And so, in his last letter, written on his dying bed, he says that the secret of my child's identity shall die with him. He will send me both the girls, but desires me to tell which is mine, and says that I must be equally kind to both, and make them my joint-heiresses, else my own child may be the sufferer."

"He was very cunning," Mr. Forsythe obliged himself to say. "And your ladyship therefore intends to divide your property between the two?"

"No, Andrew, that would not be just. My brother's child must not be my heiress, although I shall provide for her comfortably. She may be good, pure and lovely, but I cannot love her as I might have done had her parents treated me differently. She will have a home in my house, Andrew, but not in my heart. I have a letter also from my brother's executor," added the baroness, "who sent me the packet. He states the fact of my brother's death, and says that the young ladies will follow the letter to England by the next steamer. The letter has been delayed, and I saw in this morning's paper that the *Mandragon*—the steamer in which they intended sailing—has already arrived. They will be here this very day, Andrew." Lady Redwoode's eyes

sparkled, and her lovely countenance became again radiant with a mother's fond eagerness to behold her child.

"But how will you know which is your daughter?" suggested the young man. "You say the girls are of the same age. Your brother must have been confident of your inability to recognize her."

It was evidently the first time the question had presented itself to Lady Redwoode's mind. She looked surprised at its simplicity, and replied, with a confident smile:

"Ah, Andrew, you little know the mystery and depth of a mother's love. I have a sure and safe instinct, which will point out to me the child of my dead Rolfe. I shall know her the moment I look upon her face. I told you that she was fairer in her babyhood than the other. Besides, my brother's wife had Hindoo blood in her veins, and her daughter must have inherited something of her complexion and cast of features. I have no fears, Andrew," and Lady Redwoode spoke almost gaily. "I shall know my little Rolfe, notwithstanding my brother's assurance to the contrary."

"Her name is Rolfe, then?"

"No, I do not know her name. In my heart I have called her so after her father. My brother's executor says that the Misses Glinwick are named Cecile and Hellice. I have a fancy, Andrew, that Cecile is my child. Hellice is one of those barbarous names that my sister-in-law would have delighted to bestow upon her own daughter."

Mr. Forsythe strove to congratulate the mother upon her approaching happiness, but his efforts failed to give a tone of sincerity to his voice or a joyful smile to his lips. He was chagrined, and most terribly disappointed, therefore could not avoid showing it.

"Andrew," said Lady Redwoode, gently, "I understand you. You have been led to believe that you would inherit Redwoode, and you now imagine that I am about to turn you out upon the world to battle for yourself. You are dear to me for your uncle's sake, as well as your own, and I shall never treat you unjustly. Of course, my daughter will be my heiress. Your uncle would have wished it so had he known the truth. But your interests and prosperity shall not be forgotten. I believe you to be as noble and generous as your uncle was, and I should like to secure to my daughter as good a husband as mine was. Suppose, Andrew, that my child comes to us with her heart disengaged. You are not in love. What is to prevent you from winning her heart?"

"What indeed?" murmured Andrew, his face brightening, and his heart growing lighter at the kind assurances and promises of the baroness. "If she resembles you, Lady Redwoode, I shall love her from the first. But if she should not like me?"

"She is barely seventeen, Andrew, an ignorant, innocent child. If you exert yourself to make a favourable impression upon her young heart, I do not doubt but that she will love you from the first. It would give me great happiness to see you two wedded; but understand, Andrew, that I will never force my daughter's inclinations. If she should not love you, I will secure to you a handsome annuity, sufficient to maintain you as a gentleman wherever you may choose to live."

"I shall not fail to make her love me!" declared Mr. Forsythe, a red spot burning fiercely on each cheek and a gloomy expression gathering in his black eyes at the mention of an annuity. "No, I shall not fail!"

Lady Redwoode was too absorbed in her own happiness to mark the emphasis he placed upon his declaration, or she might have modified her previous remarks.

"Oh, Andrew," she said, with feverish impatience, "I can scarcely control myself when I think that in a few short hours I shall hold my child in my arms. I wonder if she has any suspicions of the truth. I wonder if my brother told the girls that one of them was not his daughter? Perhaps they are at this moment speculating with regard to their identity. But no. The same instinct that will indicate to me my darling has doubtless been already working in her heart. She knows already to whom she is coming."

She arose and crossed the floor several times with unsteady steps, her elegant robe trailing after her in luxurious folds, her arms folded upon her breast and her lovely figure half stooping, as if already she held her daughter clasped in her arms.

"You are sure she will prove to be good, pure and truthful?" asked Andrew, speaking aloud involuntarily the thought that had entered his heart. "You said that your sister-in-law was deceitful, and she had the early training of your child."

Lady Redwoode turned upon her husband's nephew almost fiercely.

"The other may be deceitful," she said, "but not she—not my child. Her father was the purest

and truest of men. You know that I scorn deceit and falsity above all things. And I have prayed all these years that she might be kept unspotted from the world. No, Andrew, do not suggest such an improbable thing to me. You have wounded me to the heart."

Mr. Forsythe expressed his regret, but Lady Redwoode scarcely heard it. She walked backwards and forwards excitedly, his remark ranking like a poisoned arrow in her breast, and paused now and then to express renewed protestations against it.

In the midst of one of these vehement assurances the door opened and a servant entered, bearing upon a salver a sealed envelope.

Lady Redwoode examined its contents eagerly, and then sank, breathless and almost fainting with excitement, into a chair.

"They have arrived," she whispered. "They landed at Southampton last evening. They will be here by the early morning train."

"Which is already due," exclaimed Mr. Forsythe, infected by her agitation. "They will be here in a few moments more."

The few moments promised lengthened into minutes, which were passed in complete silence. Lady Redwoode bowed her golden head, and her attitude indicated that her soul was seeking composure in prayer. Her nephew forebore to disturb her self-communing, but wicked and desperate thoughts beamed from his eyes like wild beasts as he felt how narrow was the isthmus between wealth and poverty, and upon how slight a thing—merely a young girl's liking—depended his future.

The silence was broken at last by the rumbling of wheels.

"They have come," said the baroness, raising her pale and agitated face. "Go and meet them, Andrew. Then send them alone to me. Shall I know her when I see her? Will my instinct fail me at the critical moment? Will she be as pure good and innocent as I have imagined her? My mind misgives me. I am tortured—frightened. Oh, Andrew, go! Bring me my daughter."

Mr. Forsythe gave a rapid glance at his reflection in a panelled mirror, strove to soften the hard expression that had stolen over his features, calmed himself by a vigorous and painful effort, and then hastened to do her bidding. With clasped hands and a heart whose pulsations resembled the quick and regular beating of a drum, the mother awaited his return and the solution of the agonizing fear that had suddenly in one great lava-flood overwhelmed her soul.

## CHAPTER II.

### LADY REDWOODE'S NEIGHBOURS.

Why do you keep alone—  
Of sorriest fancies your companions making;  
Using those thoughts which should have died  
With them they think on? Things without all remedy  
Should be without reward. What's done is done.

Shakspeare.

PRE-EMINENT among the many beautiful estates in the vicinity of Redwoode was that called Sea View, the home of Sir Richard Haughton, a young baronet but recently come into the title and property. It was neither so pretentious nor extensive as its stately neighbour, but what it lacked in grandeur was more than made up for in picturesque and simple beauty.

Its woodlands preserved a wild character and were the haunt of numerous untamed deer, who find in wild disorder at the chance crackling of a dried branch, or the sudden whirl of leaves before the wind. Its beaches, for it lay close beside the sea, consisted of long strips of shining sand dotted here and there with immense boulders. Its gardens were old-fashioned, the walks being bordered by quaintly shaped box, and guarded by fantastically cut yew-trees, and in them grew in rank and uncurbed luxuriance all those pretty flowers with strange names that were wont to delight our grandmothers.

The mansion, a relic of the pre-Elizabethan period, was half in ruins. The bare and grim walls of an ancient banquet-hall, unroofed and unadorned, frowned over a host of fallen columns beside it, and sheltered an entire wig that had yielded to the destroying hand of time. The main portion of the dwelling was of later date and promised to endure for centuries. The effect of the ruins beside the strong and handsome building, linking the past with the present, was eminently picturesque, and rendered the spot very attractive to excursionists and tourists, most of whom were quite unaware that its owner resided at Sea View.

As may be guessed, Sir Richard Haughton was a recluse. He visited no one and received no guests. But one exception may be made to this assertion. He was a frequent guest at Redwoode, and the baroness and Mr. Andrew Forsythe sometimes returned his

visits. There was but little friendliness or sympathy between the two young gentlemen, and Lady Redwoods was the only link that united them. The baronet gave to her ladyship the warm, admiring love of a younger brother, and his happiest hours were those spent in her society, soothed by the sweet music evoked by her skilful fingers, or inspired by the noble counsels and exalted sentiments that formed her own rules of action.

Sir Richard was about seven-and-twenty, but in his heart was concentrated the misanthropic bitterness of a life-time. Endowed with more than usual ardour and enthusiasm, he had once looked forward upon life as a great race, and resolved that he would take his share in it and come in at last for the glory and renown with which the world rewards its successful ones. But, at the very outset, he had made a false step, which had resulted in the wreck of his faith and trust in his kind, as well as of the hopes and ambitions that had kindled in his young soul.

From that moment the world's glittering prizes became baubles in his eyes. With a pitying smile for what he deemed the folly and weakness of the great throngs who spend their best years in a struggle for wealth or fame, and forgetting how recently he had made one of their number, he retired to his country home and devoted himself to the study of books and nature, spending his time equally in his library and his dim, wilderness-like woods. It must not be supposed that this life quite contented him. The ardour and enthusiasm that had burned in his heart like a fierce fire seven years before still smouldered there, ready to be fanned into a flame by the first favouring breeze. The heaven-imprinted instinct to struggle with the throng, to measure his strength with that of others, and to achieve something worthy of remembrance, was not dead in Sir Richard Houghton's heart, although he vainly imagined that he had smothered it.

Upon the morning indicated in the preceding chapter the young baronet stood near the wide-barred gate of a green, shaded lane near his dwelling. One arm was thrown carelessly over the neck of his horse, a handsome and spirited thoroughbred, and he leaned against the animal's side, and looked with thoughtful gaze upon the pleasant country road.

Sir Richard's face was not a handsome one, if judged by rules of art. He had not regular features, and his cheeks were devoid of any brilliant colouring. But he had a grave, earnest countenance, full of strength and power, and a pair of keen, blue eyes, whose glances had at times a strange softness and sadness. His brow was broad and high, and from it was brushed away a silky mass of fair and, floss-like hair. His firm, beautifully chiselled mouth was shaded by a fair, curling moustache that gave added dignity to his features. His chin was massive and finely shaped, and lent its share in giving a powerful cast to his countenance.

He was tall, and possessed an active and athletic figure, whose every movement was full of manly grace. In his careless attitude he stood like a young monarch surveying his realm. His entire appearance indicated that a noble soul gave expression to both face and figure—a noble soul which, though it had been wounded once, had yet within itself sufficient strength and courage to gather up its forces undaunted and engage anew in the great battle of existence. Whether the arousing impulse would ever be given to it remained to be seen.

He was deeply thoughtful, but neither his voice nor his face betrayed the subject of his musings. For some time he stood leaning against his steed, his fixed, unwavering gaze upon the winding road, and the sunlight flitting down through the crevices of the overarching foliage, tingling his fair hair with the glimmer of pale gold.

He was at length aroused by the tramping of feet close at hand—so close that he started, and the abstracted look faded suddenly out of his eyes, and gave place to an expression of annoyance as he observed that the owner of the feet had halted but a few yards distant from the gate, and was regarding him with an expression of the most intense curiosity.

The new comer was an unprepossessing individual, some years older than the baronet. He was tall and stout, with bushy black hair and whiskers, and a peculiarly ruddy complexion. His face was marvellously suggestive of those cheap, highly coloured prints so much in favour with the uncultured classes, and his attire, consisting of plaid trousers, crimson velvet waistcoat, and salmon-coloured necktie, was strangely in keeping with it. His exaggerated sporting costume, his slouching gait, the furtive look in his black eyes, and the expression of mingled shrewdness and low cunning that distinguished his features, all marked his character, and sufficiently indicated his social position.

"Sir Richard Houghton, I believe I have the

honour of addressing?" he said, with a slight bow, and a jaunty touch to the well-worn brim of his hat.

The baronet bowed half haughtily, without bestowing a second glance upon his interlocutor.

"I thought I could not be mistaken," the man observed, without appearing to be daunted by the reception of his advances. "I have the misfortune to be personally unknown to you, Sir Richard, but you may be familiar with my name," and he darted a furtive glance at the impatient baronet. "I am Thomas Sorel, manager of a travelling theatre, at your service."

A singular change passed over the baronet's face at the sound of that name. He gasped for breath, as drowning persons do, and his face became deathly pale and rigid in every feature. The hand that had lain half carelessly upon his horse's neck now grasped fiercely at the mane, as if for support, and he leaned more heavily against the animal's side.

The new comer observed the change in the baronet with evident pleasure and satisfaction. A quiet smile flickered about his lips, and a cunning expression appeared in his eyes.

"You are familiar with my name, Sir Richard, I see," he began, with an unpleasant smile. "I thought—"

What his reflections had been, however, he did not divulge. The sound of his voice appeared to restore to the baronet a portion of his equanimity, and he raised his head with sudden haughtiness and disdain, and said, coldly:

"I have heard of you, Mr. Sorel, and what I have heard has not made me desirous of your acquaintance. You can pass on."

"Thanks. I am overjoyed at the permission," returned the man, sarcastically. "But I have business with you, Sir Richard, that yet remains to be transacted. I come from my sister—"

Again that deathly paleness passed like a pall over the baronet's face. Again he gasped for breath, but now a fierce and angry expression animated his features, and his voice was cold, hard, and stern, as he responded:

"There is no need of a messenger between Margaret Sorel and me. So far as I am concerned she died seven years ago!"

"You are mistaken, Sir Richard," said Sorel, composedly. "Margaret Sorel is not dead to you so long as her name has power to blanch your cheek. She cannot be dead to you so long as she lives and the Houghton family pride exists."

Sir Richard turned upon him with an impatient gesture, and sternly pointed up the road.

"Go!" he said, in a commanding voice that would have awed any man other than the one he addressed. "Your sister has wrought harm enough to me. She wrecked my life; she made me the disappointed, aimless man I am; she robbed me of all faith in humanity; and, if you would not hear me invoke a curse upon her and hers, leave me!"

Sorel changed his position uneasily from one foot to the other, quailed visibly under the address of Sir Richard, as if he had in some degree merited its harshness, and now responded, in a dogged tone:

"Say what you will, Sir Richard Houghton, you can't alter facts any more than I can. Margaret sent me to you. She told me to say that your divorced wife was dying and required your presence!"

"Dying—Margaret dying!" exclaimed the baronet, an inexplicable expression passing over his features.

Sorel would have given much to know the meaning of that expression, and puzzled himself in vain to analyze it. Whether the emotion which gave it birth was one of joy, or grief, of anguish or relief, he could not determine. He saw only that Sir Richard had again grasped the mane of his horse, and that his blue eyes had in their depths a strangely vacant expression.

"Yes, Margaret is dying!" declared Sorel, and an attentive listener would have detected in his voice an undertone of insincerity which would have thrown serious doubt upon his assertion. "We have been travelling together on a professional tour. She has been giving Shakespearean readings, and I have been her agent. It has not been a paying business, Sir Richard. The provincial towns don't care for such entertainments, or else the fault was in my sister. She was disappointed at her ill success, and gave way to illness which she could at first have thrown off if she had tried. The truth is, Sir Richard, she is a heart-broken woman."

The baronet's lip curled scornfully, but he made no comment.

"It is true, even though you doubt it," asserted Sorel, earnestly. "She felt herself growing weaker and weaker, and at last begged me to bring her as near as possible to your home. I could not refuse her, and she is now stopping at the Crown, a little road-side inn, a couple of miles distant. I have just come from there. Her disease has made

fearful progress, and she has but a few hours more to live. She implores you to grant her one last interview."

"No, no," interrupted Sir Richard. "I cannot look upon her face again!"

There was an appearance of a smile about Sorel's mouth as he interpreted the baronet's words to be a confession of weakness, and understood that Sir Richard feared to again trust himself within reach of the fascinations that had wrought him such evil, but his manner was very gentle as he said, or rather pleaded:

"Sir Richard, I don't deny that Margaret wronged you. I will grant that she has been a bold, bad woman. But, surely, in the hour of death the errors of the guilty should not be remembered against them. It is out of Margaret's power to harm you or wound your pride now. All she asks is to see you once again and implore your forgiveness. She says she cannot die until you have pardoned her. Will you not grant her last request?"

Sir Richard preserved a brief silence, but Sorel, who was watching him keenly and stealthily, derived little encouragement for his designs when he marked how stony was the expression of the bright blue eyes, and how sternly the firm lips were compressed together under the light moustache.

"I can't send word that I forgive her," said the young baronet, at last, "for I do not. Men do not lightly forgive such injuries as mine. I said once that not even in her death would I look again upon Margaret Sorel's face!"

"I left her weeping," urged Sorel, "and begging that you would come to her, even if you came in anger to reproach her. There was a time when Margaret's slightest word was law to you and now her dying prayer passes unheeded—"

"Silence!" responded Sir Richard, his face darkening. "I will see your sister, Mr. Sorel. Since she wishes it, she shall again look upon my face!"

He pushed open the gate of the lane, led out his horse, mounted, and without another word to his visitor, passed down the road like the wind.

Sorel followed him as rapidly as he could run for a brief distance, and then struck across the fields, proceeding by a shorter route towards the inn he had mentioned.

During his swift ride a storm of passion came over the soul of the young baronet. His lips quivered and a look of terrible grief was visible in his eyes. That grief was not for the woman whose dying agonies he expected soon to witness, but for his own lost opportunities and wrecked hopes. He had never felt either as he did now when about to enter the presence of her who had so wronged him.

When his journey had been nearly accomplished he slackened his horse's pace to a walk, and exerted his self-control, soon regaining his customary calmness.

The road-side inn, a neat country cottage, surrounded on three sides by ample gardens, and bearing on its front the usual promises of entertainment to man and beast, surmounted by a sharply cut brass crown, soon appeared in full view, and the baronet's keen gaze singled out an upper chamber, with open windows, as the probable apartment of the dying woman.

He rode slowly up to the inn, dismounted at the porch, gave his horse into the charge of an ostler, and was about to demand to be conducted to the chamber of Miss Sorel, when his late visitor came up, flushed and heated, wiping his brows.

"A sharp ride, Sir Richard," he said, breathing heavily. "Permit me to prepare my sister for your coming. A moment's preparation will soften the shock of seeing you."

The baronet made no reply, except by a cold inclination of his head, and Sorel retreated within the precincts of the inn. A moment later, and the murmur of his voice from the upper chamber with the open windows came to Sir Richard, but he could not distinguish his words, nor any response to them. The man's return was almost immediate, and his appearance was subdued as he said:

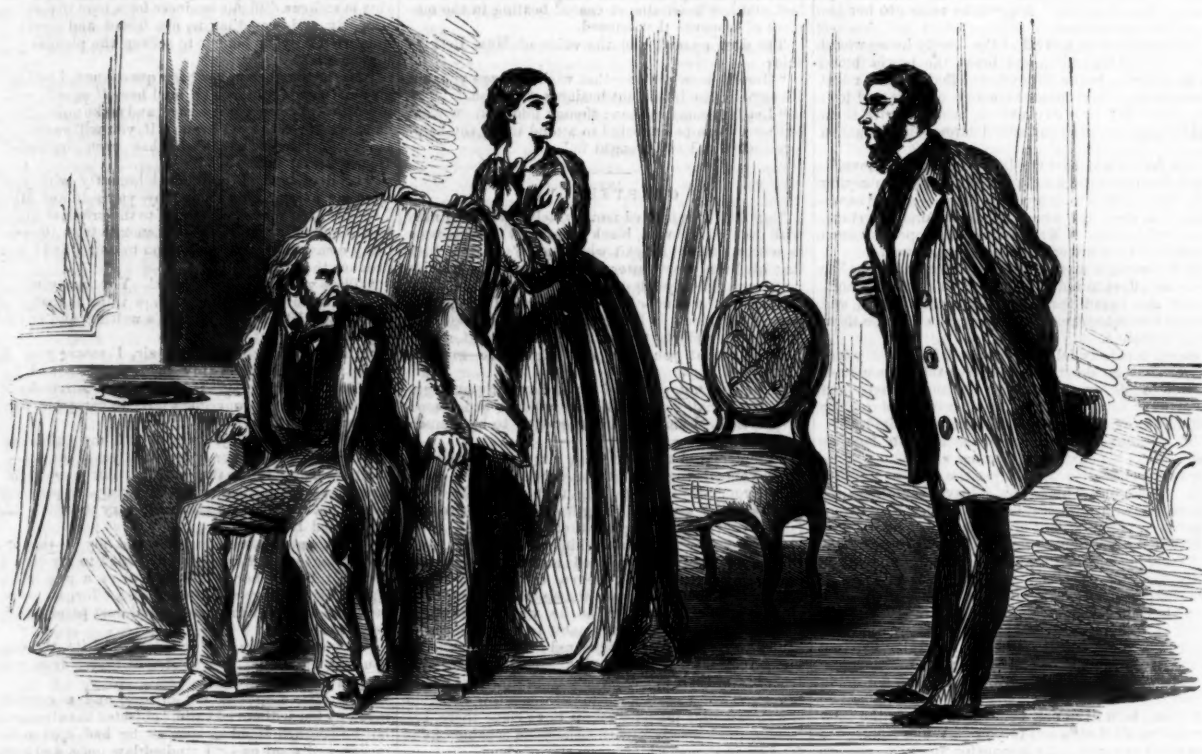
"Follow me, Sir Richard. Margaret is prepared for your coming."

He led the way to the upper room, Sir Richard following closely at his heels, with a rigid, colourless face, firm-set lips, and eyes as cold as the azure of a winter sky. He bore himself like a judge about to enter the cell of one righteously condemned.

(To be continued.)

THE TRUTH.—The spur of the French war-ship *Thetis*, cast recently in the foundry of the arsenal at Castignean, has cost 4,000*l.* as it comes from the mould—that is, 50,000 lb. weight, at 2*l.* the pound—without reckoning the polishing, trimming and the fixing of it in its place, the expense of which operation cannot well be estimated.





[MR. HOPKINS INTRODUCES HIMSELF.]

# SWEET ROSES YANGLED.

## CHAPTER LIV.

"THIS is the apartment my father ordered to be prepared for you, Miss Gordon. The view from the windows is lovely, and you will find it a cheerful and comfortable place of retreat when you are tired of being with the rest of us."

With her most charming smile Rosa replied: "If that be the condition, I do not think that I shall often bury myself in my own room, Miss Hastings. I am a social being and rarely seek solitude, if I can help it. I am already so much charmed with those I have met to-day that I am afraid I shall impose on their good nature by seeking them too much."

"You will scarcely be able to do that, for when I am gone mamma will be very dependant upon you. I shall rely on you to fill my place to my parents as far as possible."

"I shall do my best; but how can I hope to fill your place?"

"I do not mean that you should quite do that," replied Opal, with a smile mingled with a sigh. "But you can at least brighten their days, and prevent them from feeling the weary flatness that I know will fall on everything when I am actually separated from them. Mamma will feel it less than my father, and to him I expect you to be a minister of grace, for he will need consolation for giving up the pet and darling of his life."

"Then why does he allow you to marry so young? You are scarcely more than a child yet."

A cloud passed over Opal's face, and with a sudden reserve she said:

"Mr. Fenton and myself have agreed on a speedy union. Everything is here that you need, I believe, and here is Minette to attend to any orders you may give. I must go down now, for I have left Godfrey too long alone."

Rosa took off her bonnet and shawl, smoothed her hair, and dismissed the servant with orders to have her trunks brought up as soon as they arrived. She then surveyed her apartment with much satisfaction. It was spacious and elegantly fitted up, and a small dressing-room opened from it.

A fire burned behind a tall wire-fender, before which a luxuriously cushioned chair was drawn up. Rosa threw herself into it, and sat with frowning brow and compressed lips, immersed in deep thought, until her luggage arrived. She made her toilet, and dreamed and planned again till dinner was announced.

Mrs. Hastings gave her an approving glance as she descended to join the group awaiting her appearance in the lower hall; and at the table she placed her on her right hand—telling her that henceforth that was to be her place.

Mindful of the hint given her by Mr. Hastings, Rosa spared no effort to make a favourable impression upon his wife, and she talked in her most agreeable manner, although Mr. Fenton sat nearly opposite to her, devoting himself so exclusively to Opal that he seemed scarcely conscious of the presence of the jealous rival who saw and heard all that passed between them, in spite of the constant flow of small talk she kept up with her new patroness.

Mr. Hastings sat, silent and preoccupied, but he was listening to Rosa's voice, watching her tactics, and internally congratulating himself upon the ease with which she adapted herself to her new position.

He wished his wife to become fond of her, and he believed she would do so if Rosa played her part as adroitly every day as she was doing now.

After dinner was over they had some music, and the voice of the stranger was pronounced charming by those who then heard it for the first time; but Mr. Fenton never approached the piano, and when Mrs. Hastings asked him if he had ever heard better singing he calmly replied:

"Often, madam, although Miss Gordon does sing well for an amateur. However, I prefer the 'wood notes wild' of Opal to all these trained efforts. But I do not pretend to be a connoisseur."

Rosa overheard him, and, abruptly rising from the piano, she said:

"I have a bad headache, Mrs. Hastings, and if you will excuse me I will spend the remainder of the evening in my own room."

"Certainly, if you wish it. I thought you were changing colour too suddenly to be quite well. I will send tea up to you, and a cup will do you good."

"Thank you; then I will bid you good night."

She flitted up the staircase, gained her own room, and, locking the door behind her, fell into her chair in an almost hysterical passion of weeping.

When the first violence of the storm passed away Rosa arose, stood before the mirror, and, contemptuously regarding her reddened eyes and tremulous lips, she savagely muttered:

"I can feel this yet!—can weep for that ingrate!—can be weak enough to dream of bringing back his fickle heart to its allegiance to me—to me, dependant, penniless. It is madness; but I will attempt it, and woe to him if I fail!"

Daylight yet lingered over the landscape. Rosa went to a window and looked forth a few moments

in deep thought. Then opening one of her trunks she took from it her portfolio and a small patent inkstand. These she placed on a table near the window, through which sufficient light for her purpose yet came, and hastily dashed off the following lines:

"December 6, 18—.

"MR. WILKINS,—I give you leave to make your own terms for the restoration of the instrument in your possession, provided that you will telegraph to Mr. Godfrey Fenton immediately that it is in the possession of its lawful owners. If you do not obey me literally it will be the worse for you."

"R. G."

Having sealed and directed this, she became calmer; and when Minette came up with the tea she was already in bed.

On the following day the letter was sent to town to be posted, and Rosa impatiently awaited the result. The change in the prospects of Inez might induce Mr. Fenton to postpone his marriage, thus affording her more time in which to carry out her plans. That was her only object in producing this diversion in Opal's favour; for, as the day drew nearer, her reluctance to the proposed union deepened and intensified, though the poor girl thought she was learning with surprising ease the lesson she had set for herself.

## CHAPTER LV.

In the gathering twilight of a cold December day Inez and her father were together in the room she had taken such pains to fit up, in the belief that Mr. Godfrey Fenton would be pleased with its simple elegance.

Mr. Lopez leaned back in his chair, affient and pallid as if death had already set its seal upon his face. He was greatly changed, and it was evident that he was rapidly sinking to that bourne which awaits us all.

How desolate, how deserted the almost friendless daughter felt it would be impossible to tell. During the weeks of wearing anxiety and doubt since Mr. Fenton left Inez had grown thin and pale, though her trust in her lover remained as strong as ever. She had received but one letter from him, and that assured her that his mother was obstinate in her opposition to their union; but he concluded with the assurance that he would yet triumph over all objections and return to claim her as his own.

She believed him, of course; for, true as she was herself, Inez could not fathom the perfidy of which she was the victim. When no second letter came she

began to look for Mr. Fenton's arrival with certainty, for had he not pledged himself to return to her before the year was out?

The sound of an arrival at the lonely house would set her heart fluttering, and bring the bright blood to her cheeks, in the happy belief that her lover had flown back to her upon the wings of love and joy; but, alas! day after day passed, bringing with them only disappointment and added cares to the forsaken one.

Her father was now rarely free from the benumbing influence of the deadly drug that was destroying him long enough to carry on a connected conversation; for, since the wreck of his daughter's fortune, and the departure of Mr. Fenton, Mr. Lopez indulged himself in its use more recklessly than ever.

Remonstrance was useless, and Inez had ceased to make an effort to induce him to refrain. In attempting it she found that she only irritated him, and threw him into transports of anger that made them both wretched.

She mournfully felt that he would "die as the fool dieth," and go down to his grave the dishonoured victim to his own weakness; and the unhappy girl wept over him with that abandonment of feeling which her loneliness and helplessness inspired.

The bright firelight shone on his still face as he dozed in his chair, and Inez sat near him, watching every change in it, dreading the approach of that last solemn one which would leave her alone, for his physician had warned her that he might pass from life to eternity in one of those hours of stupor.

Suddenly Mr. Lopez aroused himself, and spoke:

"Inez, is Godfrey here? I—I thought I heard his voice speaking to me."

"No, papa. There is no one here but myself. You must have dreamed of him."

"Yes, I suppose so; but it is time he was here. I do not understand this delay, when he has not written. He should have been here before this."

"He will come, papa, never fear. I do not doubt him."

"That is well. Yes, believe in him to the last, for that is all that is left to you. When I am gone you will have your little income for yourself, you can sell this place, and that will add something to it, and—and—if Fenton does not come very soon after I have left you you must go there yourself. If his mother has an opportunity of seeing or knowing you, she will relent. I did not once think that I should ask my child to enter any family that would unwillingly receive her, but my pride has been brought low, and I shrink from the thought of leaving you entirely alone in the world, with no one to look to as a protector. Godfrey loves you, I am certain, and if he cannot come to you you must seek him."

"Dearest father, do not speak of leaving me!" exclaimed Inez, with a passionate burst of tears. "We have been so much to each other that I cannot bear it."

"But you must learn to look our inevitable separation in the face, Inez, for it draws very near. When I sink away to sleep, as I did just now, it is often with the thought in my own mind that I shall never wake again. I feel that I grow weaker day by day, and the end must soon come. It is best for you to know this, my child."

Inez took his wasted hand in her own, caressed, and wept over it, but she had no words to reply to him.

He tenderly said:

"Don't grieve for me, my darling. I shall go to my rest, and be a clog removed from your path. I have not been what I should have been, Inez; but I have made my peace with heaven, and through the blessed intercession of the Saviour I hope to gain a safe haven at last. Father Espana gave me such consolation this morning that I feel almost willing to go when I am summoned; were it not for leaving you, I should say that I am quite willing."

Since he had given up all hope of life Mr. Lopez had many times held long interviews with the priest.

To Father Espana he designed leaving the management of his daughter's affairs, provided Mr. Fenton did not arrive in time to receive her as his wife before his decease. He was a man of sound heart and good judgment, and Mr. Lopez felt the assurance that Inez would be carefully guarded by him, and placed in some safe asylum, should her earthly hopes be brought to wreck, as he sometimes feared they might.

Mr. Fenton's silence, his long delay in returning, had more effect on Mr. Lopez than on Inez, for he had less confidence in his intentions, though he believed fully in the genuineness of his attachment to his daughter. His knowledge of life taught him that men are often false to lovers' vows when interest demands the sacrifice of the affections, and Mr. Fenton might at last succumb to the influences brought to bear upon him.

A noise was heard in the hall, and Inez started up

trembling and panting; it might be Mr. Fenton at last, and her heart almost ceased beating in the moment of suspense that ensued.

The door opened, and the voice of Mrs. Perkins said:

"Here is a—a person—that wishes to see you, sir. He says he has important business with you."

"Let him come in then; though I don't know what business I can be expected to attend to in the helpless condition I am brought to."

#### CHAPTER LVI.

THE door was opened more widely, and a tall man with dark complexion, black hair and whiskers, came in with a shambling gait which gave one the idea that his limbs were fettered in some way. In a voice that was evidently feigned he said:

"I have the honour of seeing, Señor Lopez, I believe. My name is Hopkins; sir, and you need not trouble yourself to try and remember me, for I do not think that you ever saw me before in your life."

"I believe not, sir, and if you have any business with me, I shall be glad to have it settled as soon as possible. I am not strong enough to bear much excitement."

"I understand all about that, sir; but you mustn't allow yourself to get excited over what I have come to tell you. It is something that will make your heart sing for joy, and bring back the colour to the face of your pretty daughter there."

The stranger had stated himself familiarly, and the lamp Mrs. Perkins placed on the table flashed upon a pair of pale blue eyes, contracting so remarkably with his dark face that Inez was convinced that he was disguised. Who he was, or what his purpose could be, she was unable to divine, but she glided to the door, and whispered to Mrs. Perkins to bring Dick into the hall, and at the slightest alarm from her to rush into the room to her father's assistance. They were known to possess a few valuable jewels, and this intruder might have come there, believing the house was without anyone capable of defending it, to make himself master of them.

Mrs. Perkins nodded intelligently, and closed the door. Having taken this precaution, Inez came back to her father's side and sat down to await farther explanations. The visitor seemed to comprehend her fears, for he blandly said:

"You need not be frightened of me, Miss Lopez. I came here to serve you, as I shall soon convince you. The business that brought me is most important, which you will understand when I tell you that it is connected with the will for the recovery of which your father has offered so handsome a reward."

Inez listened in breathless interest; Mr. Lopez raised his enervated form and gazed searchingly into the strange-looking face that confronted him.

"Do you know anything of it? Have you come to restore it?" he eagerly asked. "If you have, I will give you even more than I promised."

"How much more, sir? You see I have come here to make a bargain, and I must do the best I can for the person who entrusted the business to my management."

"Then you have the will! You can bring it to light! I will give you two thousand more than I offered—if all be right, and there is no deception about it."

"I accept your terms, Mr. Lopez; and as to deception, I should scarcely attempt it with a man like you. I was sent here to let you know that the missing will is in the possession of a friend of mine, who is most anxious to restore it to its lawful owner. How it came into his hands it will be best not to inquire, but I assure you that it is safe, and will be transferred to you, or your daughter, if you will keep to the terms of your advertisement, and ask no questions."

"I shall only be too happy to do so. But why have you not made this known to me before? It is several months since that advertisement appeared, and you would have saved me from great annoyance and inconvenience if you had communicated with me before the Horton estate passed into other hands."

"My friend is as well aware of that as you can be, sir; and if he had been at liberty to act by himself, he would have treated with you long ago. But there was another party interested, and that person would not agree to give the document up. But things have worked so that the consent of that person has been given to the transfer I came here to make."

"That is satisfactory, at all events. How do you propose to settle it? What will induce you to surrender the will without farther delay?"

The visitor paused a few moments, and then said: "I know that you are a man of your word, Mr. Lopez; and your daughter is a lady who, I believe,

will do whatever she pledges herself to. You know this is rather a difficult business for a man to perform properly, and we—that is, my friend and myself—must rely on your honour to redeem the pledges you may make."

"My honour has never been questioned, I believe, sir; and my daughter shall bind herself equally with myself to pay you your reward, and make no inquiries as to who or what you are, if you will restore to her the estate of which she has been defrauded. Does not that suffice?"

"It does, and I will deal honestly with you. Give me a joint note signed by yourself and Miss Lopez for ten thousand pounds to the credit of Abraham Hopkins, as soon as money enough from the property comes into your possession to do so, and I will produce the will."

"Then you have it with you! You can give me ocular demonstration that such a thing is really in existence? I know Mr. Horton's writings, and no deception can be put upon me."

"I am not attempting one, sir, I assure you. I have it safe here in my breast-pocket, and for this note I mentioned I will at once surrender it to you, relying on your good faith to carry out your part of the bargain."

"Of course you may. Oh! I fear my child—my darling, you will have your own yet! And I—I shall die happy in the thought that now your happiness is secured beyond a doubt. Bring me pens and paper; let me write what is necessary to secure this great good for you."

Inez, trembling with surprise and joy at this unexpected turn in her affairs, hastened to lay open a portfolio before her father and place a pen in his almost lifeless fingers. He made an effort to write, but long disease of his hand had almost paralyzed it, and he cried out:

"I cannot make a legible mark. Write the note yourself, my child; it will also be better from you, for you are the heiress."

"But Miss Lopez is not of age, and a contract made by her will not be valid," objected the stranger; but he laughed aloud as soon as he had spoken the words, and went on—"I studied law once, and habit is second to nature. What does it matter in a transaction of this kind whether the young lady be old enough to be responsible in a legal point of view or not? It will be a matter of honour between her and me, and such a claim as this could not be brought into the courts at any rate. Write the note, if you please, Miss Lopez, and sign your own name to it. If the money be duly paid, I shall get it; if it isn't, you may chance to hear from me again some time or other."

Inez looked him clearly in the eyes as she coldly said:

"You will have no cause to apply to me again. The money shall be deposited as you direct as soon as I can control so large a sum. The note can be drawn up in my father's name, with mine as security, and it can pass for a liability of his."

"That will do—you have a head for business, young lady, I perceive, and the large estate you will inherit will not be badly managed."

Inez scarcely listened to him. She impatiently asked:

"What is the usual form of such things? Dictate what I am to write, and I will put it down."

"Give me a note, payable at sight, for the sum agreed upon. I shall keep a sharp look-out on the business as it proceeds, and your lawyer can place the money in the hands of the bankers. I shall know when you are able to pay it well enough."

Inez had managed her father's affairs sufficiently to know what was required, and she hastily wrote the necessary words, and offered the paper to the inspection of the visitor. He glanced over it, nodded, and said:

"Now get Mr. Lopez to scrawl his name, and place your own below it."

"I must first see that for which it is to be exchanged," said Mr. Lopez. "You can have nothing to fear from Inez and myself, and I must verify it before I affix my signature to that paper."

"I do not see the use of such a precaution in a transaction like this, but you shall be satisfied."

He drew from his breast a small parcel secured in several wrappers; unrolling these, he presented a sealed envelope, endorsed on the back:

"Roger Horton—Deed of Transfer to my granddaughter, Inez Lopez—Anno Domini, 18—"

The pallid father grasped it, held it to the light, and, in a transport of joy, cried out:

"It is—it is genuine! This is the old man's writing, and I hold in my hand the open-roses to affluence and happiness for you, my dearest Inez. I only wish that I could live to enjoy it with you, but heaven will not grant me that blessing too. It is too much to ask."

With tears in her eyes, Inez replied:



"I trust that he will, father. Without you, half the pleasure of being rich will be gone. The German brings may restore to you the use of your limbs and bring you back to what you were a few years since."

Mr. Lopez shook his head, and impatiently said: "Give me the note. Let me make an effort to sign my name for the last time; for, after this, I care little what may happen to myself."

The pen was again placed in his fingers, and, after several efforts, his name in irregular characters was affixed to it. Inez lightly dashed off her own below it, and then placed the note in the hands of the visitor.

"There, sir, the exchange is made, and you may consider this slip of paper as equivalent to the sum it represents. The first obligation I pay after my property comes into my possession shall be this one, I promise you upon the honour of a true woman."

"I can ask no more, Miss Lopez, and I am sure that I can trust you. Of course, you will summon Mr. Manly to your assistance as soon as possible, and he will speedily put things in train for the restoration of your rights. I can only regret on my own part that circumstances have so long deprived you of them."

He bowed, secured the papers he had given him in his pocket-book, and, taking up his hat, said:

"I will now bid you good-night, Mr. Lopez, leaving with yourself and your daughter my best wishes for your health and happiness."

Inez touched the bell, and Mrs. Perkins promptly appeared at the door, wearing a most curious and puzzled expression on her face. The young lady briefly said:

"Tell Dick to show this gentleman out, and guide him in safety to the road."

"There is no need of the last. I can find my way out as I found it in, Miss Lopez. I wish you a very good-night."

And the visitor walked out of the room in the same ungainly fashion with which he had entered it.

"I'm blessed if I don't believe his clothes is stuffed," whispered Dick to the old woman. "Such a small-faced man as that 'ere don't have so much flesh as that to carry. What brought him here, I wonder?"

"Never you mind," replied Mrs. Perkins, in the same guarded tone, "he has brought some good news that has brightened up my child anyhow, and I have a notion what it may be."

She placed a lamp in his hand, and Dick was obliged to follow the stranger to the steps, near which the horse he had rode was fastened. With some amusement he witnessed his efforts to mount, and the man's belief that the clothing worn by the visitor was padded gained additional strength. But he finally gained a secure seat on the saddle, and rode away in the darkness.

No sooner had the door closed on him than Inez threw herself on her knees before her father, and joyfully cried out:

"Oh, papa, papa! what have I done to deserve this great blessing? I can now bring such a dowry to Godfrey that his proud mother will be glad to welcome me as her daughter. I can give you all that you please for—you shall have change, amusement—everything that can restore you to health."

Mr. Lopez would not throw a cloud over her joy. He passed his hand caressingly over her hair, and smilingly said:

"I do not doubt that you will do all that will lie in your power for your poor father, Inez, and I hope that I may at least be spared long enough to see you united to your lover. You must write to Godfrey to-morrow, and tell him what has happened. Send in for Mr. Manly at as early an hour as possible; and, in the meantime, place this precious document in a place of safety."

Thus brought back to the prosaic realities of life, Inez took the package from his hand, pressed the lines written by her grandfather to her lips, and then hastened to place it in a cabinet in which her mother's diamonds were kept. She retained the key in her own possession, and, sitting down beside her father, talked to him with all her former gaiety and brightness.

Half an hour of unalloyed happiness in the prospects opening before her flitted away on light wings, and then Mrs. Perkins came in with the waiter, and arranged the small table on which Mr. Lopez took his meals. With this faithful friend Inez could have no secrets, and she blithely said:

"What has been so long sought in vain has come to light at last, Jane. That singular-looking man came hither to restore the missing will, and I have it safe."

The nurse dropped the plate she was placing upon the table, and stared in mute surprise; but she presently found the use of her tongue and poured forth

such a volume of inquiries and congratulations that Inez found it difficult to answer them. She ended by saying:

"That fellow stole it himself, I'll bet any amount, Miss Inez; and I s'pose he asked a pretty penny for giving it back?"

"Of course he has had his reward, or he will have it, which is the same thing; but you must be very prudent and say nothing of his visit here."

"Of course, miss, I understand—when people brings back stolen goods they don't want their visits talked about. I know what I am about, and I'll hold my tongue of course. But I wish the fellow could be brought up for a short time in place of being paid for his rascality."

"I would cheerfully have paid him double the sum I am to give him if he had brought me this good fortune three months ago," replied Inez, with a faint sigh.

Mr. Lopez impatiently added: "Give me my tea, Jane; I am tired and too much excited for my state of health."

Mrs. Perkins acted on this hint, and served the meal in silence, though her beaming and triumphant glances told Inez how deeply she shared in her joy.

An order was sent to Dick to set out for Newport at an early hour on the following morning with a note written by Inez to Mr. Manly, briefly informing him of what had occurred, and requesting his immediate appearance at the Glades.

It was later than usual when Mr. Lopez retired, and Inez sat several hours talking with her nurse, and blithely arranging her future plans. For a brief space of time she was deeply, unutterably happy; for not a doubt of her lover's truth came across her mind to mar the sweetness of the cup that was so unexpectedly offered to her lip. She quaffed whole draughts of joy, and most sorely did she need them to sustain her through the bitter trials that yet awaited her loving and devoted heart.

Inez at a late hour retired to her own apartment. She looked in upon her father, saw that he was sleeping quietly, and, after pouring out her soul in thanks to heaven, she sought her couch, hoping to dream of Mr. Godfrey Fenton—to be with him at least in spirit through the hours of slumber. But sleep refused to come to her eyelids; the excitement of the evening had effectually banished it, and the uncouth form of her recent visitor came between herself and her lover, diverting her thoughts from Mr. Fenton, and fixing them by a kind of fascination upon himself.

She recalled the stained face; for Inez had penetrated the disguise, and knew that a fair complexion and sandy hair were concealed beneath the artificial tinge and raven wig.

That it was Wilkins himself who had come to her under a feigned name to restore what he had purloined she did not for a moment doubt; but she had forbore to suggest this to her father.

Let him profit by his rascality, though she would have given much to understand why this long delay had been necessary in restoring the will to her, as she could any day have made as good terms with her father.

Finally, wearied with conjecture, Inez fell asleep, but she did not dream of Mr. Fenton.

All night she was falling from a great height, to find herself caught in some mysterious manner on a gossamer cloud which bore her lightly onwards till the same giddy experience recurred, to meet always with the same result.

The voice of Mrs. Perkins at her bedside aroused her, and she heard her say:

"It is getting late, Miss Inez, and as Dick has come back with a message from Mr. Manly, saying that he will be here by ten o'clock, I thought I had better rouse you up that you might be quite ready to receive him."

"Thank you, Jane. I have overslept myself, but I shall soon be ready for breakfast. Is papa awake yet?"

"Bless your heart, yes; he is in the parlour waiting for you. As soon as he heard that the lawyer was coming he insisted on being dressed and taken out at once."

"So much the better. I am glad he is so well. Ah! I hope this piece of good fortune will bring new life to him."

When Inez joined her father she thought that it had indeed had that effect, for she had not seen his eyes brighten with such animation for years. He greeted her with a kiss, and hastened to dilate on what they would do when Mr. Fenton came, with a lightness of heart that gave her now hope for him.

The breakfast things were scarcely cleared away when Mr. Manly arrived. He came in looking glad and excited, and, grasping the hand of Inez with friendly warmth, said:

"You have the deed, Miss Lopez? It's all safe and right. I assure you my dear young lady, that

a terrible weight was taken from my heart by the announcement your note made. I could never have died satisfied, knowing that a trust confided to my care had slipped through my fingers, even with no fault of my own. Come tell me all about it."

Inez produced the deed, laid it before him, and briefly explained how it came into her possession.

"But what could the thief mean by withholding it so long? Why did he not communicate with you before the estate passed into the hand of trustees for that charity? We shall have double trouble now to get possession of it; and it is a shame that you should have been kept out of your own all these months."

"That does not signify now, Mr. Manly," replied Inez, with a smile. "I do not think there will be much difficulty in making a compromise, as I do not wish to take from the poor orphans the home that has been given them at Oaklands. My father agrees with me that the old place shall be given to the county as an asylum, with an endowment from the estate of ten thousand pounds. Such a settlement as that will prevent litigation, which I wish by all means to avoid."

"You are very liberal, Miss Lopez; but I think that halt will suffice to prevent a lawsuit which would be sure to end in your favour. There will still be enough, and to spare, left; for I have been looking into Mrs. Hawks's affairs, and I find that the property left by her is worth nearly four hundred thousand pounds. You are a great heiress, and a most charming girl, I must say. You are positively radiant to-day."

"Thank you; but I am most happy," replied Inez, with a silvery laugh that rippled musically from her red lips.

Mr. Lopez impatiently asked:

"There is no doubt—not the shadow of a doubt, I hope, of the nature of the settlement you hold in your hand, Mr. Manly?"

"Not the slightest, I believe; but we can soon arrange all that. Mrs. Perkins is here, I believe, and the man who came in for me seems an intelligent fellow; we will have them in, and, after explaining to them what it contains, we will break the seal of this envelope and satisfy ourselves as to what its provisions are."

The bell was rung and immediately responded to by the appearance of Mrs. Perkins. Dick was summoned, and Mr. Manly said to them:

"I wish you both to examine the superscription of this envelope, and, hereafter, if necessary, to testify to the fact that it was opened in your presence, and its contents read aloud to you."

"Of course we will, sir. We are ready to do anything that will help to bring Miss Inez to her own again," said Mrs. Perkins, briskly. "I always believed that the will of the old master would turn up, and sure enough the rascalion that's had it all this time repented of his villany and brought it back."

The writing was duly examined, the seal broken, and the little party listened with breathless interest to the voice of Mr. Manly as he read in clear tones an instrument perfect in all its details, which gave instant to Inez Lopez, the only child of Mr. Horton's beloved daughter, Susan Lopez, the whole of his large estate, to be enjoyed by her after the decease of Eunice Hawks, *ne* Horton.

The reader ceased, cleared his throat and said:

"It is as I always believed. Mrs. Hawks had no more than a life interest in the property, and this must decide your claim to it beyond all doubt, Miss Lopez."

Inez turned to her father to see the effect of this upon him.

He was leaning back with his eyes closed, his hands clasped in thankfulness; but there was a singular expression on his face that alarmed her.

A death-like pallor had taken the place of the more healthy hue excitement had brought to his dark cheeks, and his eyes seemed wandering in vacancy.

He faintly gasped:

"Thank heaven! It is all yours! I am going where money is of no avail, but you will be happy with the one that loves you Inez. Seek him; don't wait for him to come to you, for others may withhold him. Heaven bless you, darling of my heart, and keep you always."

"Oh, papa, don't—don't. You break my heart talking and looking so. There are your drops."

And with her own hand Inez hastened to offer him the preparation of opium he sometimes used in place of the gum.

He put it back, feebly saying:

"Too late, too late. It can do no good now. Kiss me, Inez, and do not mourn too bitterly over my loss. Let Godfrey speedily wipe away your tears, and be as happy as you deserve to be."

Inez stooped forward and kissed him many times.

though the touch of his chilling lips sent a wild thrill of fear through her heart.

With one long, struggling sigh, the spirit of her father escaped from his worn-out frame, at the very moment the fruition of his most ardent hope had been gained. The overtaxed heart ceased its pulsations for ever, and all that remained of the parent that had loved her was his broken-down and wasted body.

But it was long before Inez could be brought to believe that he was really dead, and she vainly used every effort to brink back the life that had flickered so long, to be extinguished in that hour of triumphant joy.

(To be continued.)

### CHESTER VALE.

THE Red Room, as they always called the south parlour at Roxeter Hall, had not been lighted yet, save by the blaze that leaped, crackled, and sent up ruby jets of splendour from the deep, open grate sunk in one side of its crimson-draped walls.

Upon a low seat before the fire sat—the only occupant of the apartment—Syra Lodell, the adopted heiress, people said, of Lionel Masterton, the owner of Roxeter Hall. The firelight showed a graceful, undulant shape, a dark wreath of braids brought low on the pearly cheek, the clasp of white fingers on her knee, and the slow tapping of a very little foot upon the hearth.

Lip and eye were thoughtful in their expression; the one curled and the other flashed briefly as a step sounded on the outside, and presently a stately-looking gentleman came in with the remark:

"I was looking for you, Syra."

"Were you, sir?"

"I thought I should find you here; you always like this room, and it suits you. You look like a picture set in a crimson frame to-night, Syra."

Syra's white lids drooped so that he could not see the expression that darkened again under them. Syra was not accustomed to such speeches, and they suited her less from him than from most people; but she did not speak.

"I trust you have by this time reconsidered your hasty decision of last night, Syra," he said, after a pause; "that you have concluded to become mistress where you have hitherto been only—"

"Allow me to supply the word at which you hesitate, Mr. Masterton. A dependant you would say," Syra said, with such quiet self-possession as almost to divest the shaft of its sarcasm.

"My dear child, not that, certainly not; the woman a man means to marry can never stand to him in the relation of a common dependant. I have never looked upon you in that light. I always meant to marry you, Syra."

The girl gave a start of involuntary hauteur, and frowned slightly.

"There are rights which no state of dependancy can alienate from a woman. The right of choosing whom she will marry is one of them," she said, trying to speak quietly, but a passionate red suffused her cheek.

Mr. Masterton laughed.

"And you do not choose to marry me?"

"Precisely," she said, growing pale again.

"What will you do then? Foolish child, who have you ever seen that you would choose in preference to me? I am not a bad match, as you women call it, by any means. True, I am older than you; but that disparity is more than balanced by the advantages. What do you find in me to object to, my dear?"

"I object to nothing, sir, saving the intentions you say you have always had towards me. It was not generous to load me with benefits, and then try to make of them chains to force my inclinations."

He laughed again as at the pretty playful humours of a petted child.

"Don't be foolish, Syra; no one wishes to force your inclinations. It would indeed be rather late in the day for me to begin, since I never in my life denied you anything, did I, Syra?"

Syra showed how much she had been indulged by her next words.

"It was because you felt too much above me to do so," she said, with temper. "You would not oppose your might to such weakness as mine. Even now you laugh at me in your strength, and think that I mean nothing when I say I would not be your wife if you were a king."

His straight black brows contracted slightly as the daring girl spoke; but he only laughed in his provoking way.

"Well, well," he said, "you must have still another day to meditate upon the advantages of being mistress of Roxeter Hall. I can afford to wait for your

answer, child, because I know what it must be in the end; and I acknowledge that all these pretty, haughty airs of yours amuse me vastly. They will become Mrs. Lionel Masterton quite as well as they do my little Syra."

She made a passionate gesture.

"Do you not understand, sir, that I have not for you such love as a man desires in a wife? I never thought of marrying till you asked me a week ago the question you have repeated with such pertinacity every day since. I have been taught to look up to you as to a parent. I tell you it is impossible to change the nature of that regard."

"I take upon myself the possibility of changing it to the most proper of wifely affection," he said, lightly. "As my wife, you shall forget that you were ever anything else."

"I shall never be your wife, sir. Oh, I am very sure of that. I love you, and am grateful to you for your kindness to an otherwise friendless child, but every instinct of my nature revolts from becoming your wife."

His brow knit again.

"You are talking supreme nonsense, Syra; and, child as you are, you ought to know it," he said, with more impatience than he had yet displayed. "But come to the drawing-room, will you not? Olivia is there alone, and may think we neglect her," he added, with sudden change of manner.

Silently Syra followed him, and, the drawing-room reached, sat there unattractive, in spite of the efforts of the others to draw her into conversation. But her air was thoughtful and troubled—nothing more. Syra never pouted, spoiled child though she was.

"Olivia," said Lionel Masterton to his sister, desisting at last from his efforts to entertain Syra, "I haven't answered Chester Vale yet. I've been waiting for you to ascertain Mrs. Wharton's address. Have you procured it?"

"Oh, yes; and the situation will be just the thing for her. She writes to inquire for such a position as the one at Chester's would be, and I think you cannot do better than write to him and her by the same mail. Mrs. Wharton would be a treasure in any man's house, and I am sure she will like Chester. It's curious what an incorrigible old bachelor he is."

Syra lifted her eyes during this speech, and once or twice was about to mention that she had heard from Mrs. Wharton since Olivia, but some thought restrained her; and as Lionel Masterton left the room, saying he would go to the library and attend to that matter at once, her glance followed him to the door with an expression of aroused and eager attention.

Mrs. Wharton was an old family friend of the Mastertons, now impoverished circumstances, who had written to Miss Olivia to inquire for a situation as housekeeper in some gentleman's family, where she would be likely to receive the consideration due to her former circumstances, and be treated more as an equal than a servant. Miss Olivia did not know that Syra had received a letter since she had, in which Mrs. Wharton announced the fact of her having secured already such a place as she wished.

Syra quietly resolved to keep that information to herself for reasons that had suddenly suggested themselves to her, and went away early to her own apartment to ponder upon some scheme, the details of which she had yet to arrange.

Near midnight, when all had retired, as she supposed, she descended, and noiselessly sought the library. A smile, half defiance, half roguery, curving her red lips as she espied the letters on the table, waiting for the morning to be dispatched to their destination.

Just glancing at the superscription of Chester Vale's letter, she laid it down again and took up Mrs. Wharton's. She smiled as she discovered that, with his usual carelessness, Mr. Masterton had so negligently sealed this letter that she could easily open it, which she proceeded to do, removing the contents and depositing in their place a blank piece of paper, and resealing it more effectually than Mr. Masterton had done.

This done she effected her escape to her own apartment again without attracting attention.

"Mr. Masterton has often asked me of late what I should do if I did not marry him," she murmured to herself as she moved actively about her chamber. "I will show him. Of course I know that Roxeter Hall cannot be my home after I have refused to become the wife of its master. That is the alternative he means to force upon me in the end, and he shall find that child, as he persists in considering me, capable of anticipating even him."

When Lionel Masterton went down to a late breakfast the following morning, for he was not an early riser, he found his sister, who was of an indolent habit likewise, but had been waiting some time

in the dining-room this morning, fretting because Syra had not yet come down—Syra, who was usually up with the lark. Breakfast waited yet a little longer, and then Lionel sent a servant to see if Miss Syra had risen, and to tell her that breakfast waited.

The servant returned immediately to say that the young lady's couch did not seem to have been occupied the night before, and that she herself was not in the room then, though it bore a somewhat littered appearance, as though she had but just left it. In short, Syra had vanished in a most inexplicable manner from Roxeter Hall, leaving behind her only the briefest of good-byes in the shape of the following note, over which Lionel Masterton bent his black brows grimly:

"DEAR GUARDY.—I'm off, hoping that when we next meet we may both be in full possession of those senses which one of us seems bereft of at present (I do not say which). Have no anxiety regarding me. If I find that I cannot take care of myself I will let you know. Affectionately,

"SYRA LODELL."

"The reckless child! I wonder what she has taken into her head now," he muttered, in mingled anger and anxiety. "I have a mind to wait and see who will find their senses first, she or I. It will not be long before she will be ready enough to confess that she cannot take care of herself; the lesson may do her good, and save me future trouble in taming this modern Katherine."

He waited, outwardly careless, but inwardly anxious, for no news came of Syra; and when, finally, too uneasy concerning her to wait longer, he instituted such investigations as were at his command, he still was unable to hear anything of her, and he and Olivia fell at last into a half-sulky despair at being so baffled by such a slip of a girl as that.

Chester Vale wrote towards the end of the month to express his complete satisfaction with Mrs. Wharton, the new housekeeper they had sent him, and who had been with him already long enough to convince him that her equal could not be found.

Both Olivia and Lionel read amazingly, Mrs. Wharton having written within a week only to regret that she had already engaged her services elsewhere, before learning of Chester Vale's desire to obtain them. Could there be two Mrs. Whartons?

Curious to solve this puzzle, Olivia wrote to Mrs. Wharton's address as her letter had given it, and Mr. Masterton to Chester Vale. Replies came swiftly; Olivia's correspondent in high indignation at her namesake, and Chester Vale vastly amused and contented with the Mrs. Wharton whose services he had been so fortunate as to secure. She suited him quite as well as the other Mrs. Wharton could possibly have done, probably better.

Beyond that he expressed no interest, but he felt some, or else he would not have sent for Mrs. Wharton to his parlour the evening he received the letter, questioning her about her knowledge of the Mastertons, for, having brought a letter from Lionel himself, she must of course know them.

Mrs. Wharton—this Mrs. Wharton—declared distinctly and with some emphasis that she did know the Mastertons well, and that the letter she brought had been written by Mr. Masterton, of course. Who else should it have been written by?

She expressed herself plainly enough, but Chester Vale did not feel altogether satisfied that she had told the whole truth, though he could not for the life of him conceive why she should withhold any part of it.

Mrs. Wharton, Chester Vale's housekeeper, would have looked much younger and prettier if it had not been for the disfiguring caps she wore, which came quite over her face and covered her hair completely. She had an unusually young, fresh face, and really a fine figure for a woman of her years and sorrows. Her dress was of the most sombre description, and her manner quiet, her eyes nearly always downcast. These were enough of themselves to establish the fact that she must at some period of her life have been a remarkably beautiful woman. They were large, dark and lustrous still, beyond any eyes Chester Vale had ever seen, and if by chance he encountered them—which rarely happened—he was vaguely conscious of a curious thrill all through him that he could not in any way account for.

Mrs. Wharton was not talkative, but what she said she said well, and in a voice that affected Chester Vale very much as her eyes did. She was retiring and sedate, wore glasses most of the time, and did not seem very anxious to sit with Mr. Vale when he requested her of an evening to do so.

Chester Vale was a good-looking though somewhat elderly bachelor—rich too—and there were plenty of pretty girls in the village who would have gladly entertained him to the best of their ability as many evenings in the week as he chose. But he did not choose.



He seemed to like a book better at his own bachelor fireside, or even a fragmentary chat with Mrs. Wharton, who spoke mostly in monosyllables, and evidently felt ill at ease in conversation with him.

She kept his house, though, as it had never been kept since the lifetime of his mother. Such order, neatness and decorum had not reigned there for some time.

The servants, who had proved refractory beyond measure under all other rule, fell gently into their places now, and the whole domestic machinery moved smoothly.

"Mrs. Wharton," said Chester Vale, one evening, as he finished the perusal of a letter he had just received, "will you be good enough to see that a room is put in entire readiness for a guest whom I expect to-morrow? and, you must pardon me for reminding you of a matter which I daresay you have heard enough about already. It is Mr. Masterton whom I am expecting to-morrow, and he declares quite emphatically in his letter that he knows but one Mrs. Wharton, and that you cannot be that one. I suspect he is coming more to see you indeed than me. He is of an inquisitive turn, and it is the first visit he ever vouchsafed me."

Mrs. Wharton had certainly grown pale while he talked, and her knitting lay idly upon her knee, as though her fingers were too tremulous to display their usual swiftness in its management.

Mr. Chester looked puzzled.

"I beg to assure you," he went on, "my dear madam, that I have done or said nothing whatever to encourage this inquisitorial trip of Mr. Masterton's. I don't care whether you're Mrs. Wharton or not, you're my housekeeper, and I am sure I never had so good a one in my life, and, though I confess to some natural curiosity as to what Mr. Masterton will say, I don't care a straw beyond that. As I said before, you're a good housekeeper, and that's enough for me."

Mrs. Wharton gathered up her knitting, and rose to leave the room. She had not spoken before, but now she said, quietly:

"Mr. Masterton will scarcely deny to my face that he knows me well."

Chester Vale looked after her as she quitted the room, with a more puzzled expression than ever, saying to himself:

"It's a queer affair any way. She's not a woman anyone would easily forget—and Masterton least of all. Hullo, what's this!"

He stooped, and took from the floor near where Mrs. Wharton had been sitting, a portemonnaie. A dainty little thing it was—mother-of-pearl with gold mountings, and a name traced on a golden scroll; just as he was reading which the door reopened, and Mrs. Wharton came hurriedly in and towards him.

Her eyes sought the floor first, then were lifted to his hand. With a low cry she snatched the portemonnaie from him, and was hurrying away again, but he caught her hand and held it with a grasp that there was no escaping.

With her face from him, she murmured some confused apology for her abruptness, but he, still holding her hand in that firm, unyielding pressure, led her across the room to the tall pier-glass, and, without speaking, pointed to the vision its depths revealed.

A vision, indeed!

After leaving him the housekeeper had gone to her chamber and removed the neckerchief she usually wore, and untied the strings of her cap before she missed the portemonnaie and came running back frantic with haste.

The cap had fallen back in her hurry, the absence of the muffling neckerchief exposed a round and snow-white neck, over which flowed long, dark ringlets escaping from the untied cap.

The housekeeper looked and began to tremble. The very earth seemed to shake under her, and tears swelling under her white eyelids rolled slowly down her cheeks.

Chester Vale seemed as agitated as she. His breath came short and quick, and his eyes shone luminously.

He dropped her hand when he saw she was trembling, but she did not go at once. Turning partly towards him, without lifting her eyes, she said:

"I have nothing to say in self-justification. I was going away before Mr. Masterton should arrive. I do not ask you to pardon the seeming unwomanliness of what I have done, but I am not entirely so culpable as you may perhaps think. Don't blame me too severely."

"How do you know that I blame you at all?" he asked.

"You cannot help it. I saw what a rash and unmaidenly step I had taken very soon after my arrival here; but I trusted to the impenetrability of my disguise, and I wished to stay. The excitement and novelty of my position fascinated me, and so I kept putting off going away. But I should have gone in the morning, sir, and you would never have known—"

"That I had been entertaining an angel unawares," he said, abruptly. "Well, as you say, you have taken a very rash and unmaidenly step. You have wronged yourself in coming here as you have; but you will have wronged me more if you go away now."

"You, sir?" lifting her lustrous eyes an instant and dropping them before the glance of his.

"Me, because you deprive me of a housekeeper whose equal I shall never find again. How do you expect to compensate me for such a loss?"

She looked puzzled, his manner so serious and earnest.

"Is there any way, sir?" she asked, smiling.

"One."

He extended his arms, saying:

"Make it unnecessary for me to procure another housekeeper by remaining as my wife."

She understood him suddenly and eluded his clasp, while the rich colour mantled her beautiful face. It was Syra herself who stood poised an instant on the threshold with bashful, backward glances, and then fled away to her room.

When Lionel Masterton came the next day, and asked almost as soon as he was in the house to see Mrs. Wharton, Chester Vale went out of the room and came back with Syra.

"You!" Lionel said, receding a step, and growing pale with sudden anger.

"Speak to him," pleaded Syra of Mr. Chester.

"Don't let him be so angry with me."

"Don't blame her too much, Masterton," Mr. Chester said, approaching him. "She would never have consented to be your wife, and she will not now consent to be mine without your approval. You won't refuse us that, old friend?"

He certainly would have refused if he had seen any prospect of winning her himself. But he did not. It was sufficiently evident that she loved Mr. Chester, and she had given such evidence of firmness already that he clearly saw that he must consent, and did so with as good a grace as he could.

He never quite forgave Syra, however, for disappointing his pet scheme with regard to her till he had been married himself some years. C. C.

## SCIENCE.

**MACHINERY.**—The value of improvements in machinery may be estimated from the fact that in 1819 it required two furnaces, each with a high chimney shaft, to produce 1,000 ft. of glass per week, while now two furnaces with but one shaft produce 12,000 ft., with the same if not a smaller consumption of fuel.

**THE BOMBAY AND BARODA RAILWAY.**—About 120 ft. of the embankment of the southern extremity of the bridge over the Nerbudda river on the Bombay and Baroda Railway has been washed away by a flood. The country south of the Nerbudda is flooded for miles. The line of telegraph has been washed away for a distance of four miles.

**WATER.**—The hardness of water does not affect its salubrious qualities; perfectly pure soft water when in contact with chalk will dissolve but a very small quantity. A gallon of water weighing 70,000 grains will take up but two grains of carbonate of lime. When we find twenty grains or so in solution it is owing to the presence of carbonic acid gas, found abundantly in some water.

**SPOTS ON THE SUN.**—I estimate the size of the spot, or rather united cluster of spots as seen by me to-day (Sept. 16), as approximately 50,000 miles in length, and 30,000 in width. The solar envelopes have for a considerable period been in a condition of comparative quiescence, they now appear to have entered upon a period of extensive disturbances. Those of your readers who have not access to telescopes with astronomical eye-pieces will be able to see the larger sun spots by means of opera-glasses, field-glasses, or common portable telescopes; care, however, must be taken to use very dark-coloured glass as a protector to the eyes when making observations. T. P. B.

**A GIANTIC CASTING.**—In no departments of labour are the progressive tendencies of the age more fully developed than in the art of casting. Scarcely a quarter of a century has passed since the attention of the world was turned to the Royal Foundry of Munich, when Ferdinand Müller was superintending the construction of that famous colossal statue, "The Bavaria," which was then considered one of the most gigantic undertakings of the day, the breast part alone containing 380 cwt. of metal. Since then, however, many improvements have been made in the art, and, novelty being no longer excited, such great interest

is unknown. In the presence of a number of gentlemen a great casting was successfully completed in the foundry of Messrs. Rowan & Sons, York Street, Belfast. The casting was a fly-wheel, 24 ft. in diameter, and weighing upwards of 330 cwt. It is intended for B. Hannan, Esq., of the Riverstown Mills, county of Westmeath, and is one of the most ponderous articles that have been produced in this country. The rapidity with which the whole work was done was surprising, and is mainly due to an improvement recently introduced by the active and intelligent foreman, Mr. Samuel Rushton, by which seventeen tons of metal were melted in the space of two hours. The work was effected by means of three ladles, containing respectively eight, six, and three tons, which were raised by a crane, and guided by a number of the men. So closely were the calculations made that the surplus metal only weighs a few pounds. It took place under the inspection of the Messrs. Rowan. It is pleasing to state that this foundry is in full operation, and giving employment to 230 hands.

**A LIFE-SAVING MATTRESS.**—Experiments have been made in America with the view of testing Holding's Life-saving Mattress. The mattresses in question are intended to take the place of the ordinary mattresses on board vessels. The lower portion is composed of cork cuttings encased in canvas, while on the top is a second mattress of hair—the whole intended to serve the double purpose of a bed and life-preserver. Thus, if a passenger is awakened in the night and finds the vessel sinking, he has only to pick up the mattress and jump into the water in order to be safe. The steamer *Silas O. Pierce*, having a party on board, arrived within half a mile of the shore, when five men, each having a mattress, jumped off from the vessel. The beds proved to be exceedingly buoyant, and the men sat on them and paddled themselves ashore by using their hands as paddles.

## THE PRIDE OF THE FAMILY.

### CHAPTER XII.

"WHERE were you at dinner-time? Everything was spoiled waiting for you," said her uncle to Miss Merton.

"Go on, go on, you will lose him," said she, authoritatively.

And she drew a long sigh of relief when she saw Tristain in the carriage by her uncle's side.

"Now I can go home," she said. "I wonder what danger menaced him! what invisible power urged me on! This evening I will manage to tell him his mistake."

And she smiled softly.

But in the evening, just as Miss Merton, exquisitely dressed, and with a face strongly blended with shyness and roguish triumph came into the parlour, making it radiant with her beauty and grace, there came a furious peal at the bell, and Mr. Walter Sattontall was shown into the room. He was anxious and hurried, almost abrupt in his carelessness of the warm welcome of his fair hostess.

"Yes, yes, another time I'll stay, Anna. I'm in a great hurry now. I've come to carry off Tristain. Get your coat and hat, Mr. Tristain."

"Anything wrong, sir?" demanded Tristain, somewhat alarmed and uneasy.

"Yes, sir, a great deal wrong. I'll tell you all about it. Come."

In a few moments more Tristain followed him to the door. The light of the carriage lanterns showed him a pair of reeking horses, and two men inside. He recognized them at once. The cashier of the bank at which most of Sattontall, Son & Co.'s funds were deposited, and the police officer of that establishment. The brave heart of Tristain Worth gave one great bound. "Mr. Sattontall, what does this mean?" demanded he, hoarsely.

"I don't believe it, Tristain. I won't believe it; but the proofs are frightful. Get in, lad, and in heaven's name show us the way out of this!"

Tristain obeyed. The bright light from the lamps shining into the broad windows showed them all his pale, set face.

"Mr. Tristain," said the cashier, "you were in town to-day."

"No, sir, you are mistaken," answered Tristain. His employer groaned as if a knife had been thrust into him.

"I told them they would never catch you in a lie. Tristain, Tristain, have you deceived me all this time?"

"Mr. Tristain, I have taken my oath that you came to the bank this morning and drew out ten thousand five hundred pounds," said the cashier, gravely.

"My heaven! and you believe it, Mr. Sattontall?"

"I can't believe it yet, Tristain. I would give

twice the sum to hear you disprove it. But we have already learned by the station-master that you went by one train, and returned by the next. And you have just denied it. Oh, Tristain, how could you?"

"I did not go to town. I stopped at Green Lawn. I expected to meet someone there."

"Can you prove an alibi?" asked the policeman.

"The author of the appointment failed of his agreement; I saw no one, spoke to no one, except to a man at work in a field near at hand. I fear he would not remember me," answered Tristain, in a low, heart-broken tone.

The cashier coughed significantly.

"I would suggest a free confession, and the reimbursement of the funds. Mr. Sattontall is so grieved he will not press a suit; the matter can be quieted."

"Man!" thundered Tristain. "I never soiled my fingers with a pilfered pin. Do you think I would turn thief and felon against my best friend, my benefactor? I am the victim of hideous circumstantial evidence, but I am as innocent as the most sinless babe. Was the cheque forged?"

"Tristain, Tristain, how can I believe you?" groaned Mr. Walter. "It was the missing draft which was lost. You remember I took down the number, the figures were altered, and the date."

"Another link against me! Great heavens! are my misfortunes never to cease?" exclaimed Tristain, wearily; "there is but one other blow to fall."

"And that?" asked the cashier, curiously.

"Is not for me to tell," replied Tristain. "But I will not lose courage. Tell me all the circumstances; I may see a ray of light. You have discovered the matter promptly. Had I been guilty of this deed should I have lingered in the very spot where you would be likely to come for me?"

"Such speedy detection could hardly have been anticipated," answered the cashier, "and a show of innocence is to be expected. How can you have the effrontery to deny the evidence of my own eyes?"

"How was the person dressed? What was he like?"

"Like your ordinary appearance in every particular."

"And no moustache?" questioned Tristain, with a little gasp of the breath.

"No moustache whatever," answered the gentleman, indignantly; "you know that very well, sir."

"Tristain, have you any suspicion? Are you thinking of anyone in particular?" eagerly asked Mr. Walter.

"Nothing that will help me, sir. Heaven bless you for your goodness, and keep me from going mad."

The rest of the way was passed in silence. Arrived in town, the policeman turned inquiringly to Mr. Sattontall:

"I must go, sir, for an officer to make out the proper instrument. He will have to be guarded to-night, and taken to the prison."

Mr. Walter groaned, and could not answer. Tristain bent forward and took his hand.

"Don't grieve so bitterly, Mr. Sattontall; I know how reluctantly you do this. But it is right, for my own character's sake. I should demand an investigation. Take my solemn assurance of my innocence to comfort you."

The cashier, naturally enough disgusted by such seemingly flagrant hypocrisy, whistled during this speech.

"We forgot to tell you that a man answering exactly to your description, in about the time required to walk promptly from our bank to the wharf, engaged a passage in a steamer to New Zealand, and was greatly angered to find the day of sailing was postponed for a week, on account of an accident to the engines," said he, coolly, as Mr. Walter stretched out his hand towards Tristain. The kind hand was hastily withdrawn, and Tristain sank back again, weak.

The gray morning broke with slow, drizzling rain about the gloomy prison walls. Was it because Tristain's haughty head was laid low in one of the felon's cells that nature herself wept dismal tears?

#### CHAPTER XIII.

POOR Mr. Walter was as heart-stricken as if it had been a personal calamity. He went about like one in a dream, and only shook his head sorrowfully at every new link hunted up by the detectives at work.

"To think I have been so egregiously mistaken," he repeated, again and again. "I would have trusted him with uncounted millions. I will never believe again in anyone's honesty."

He did his best to discover proof of Tristain's stopping at the obscure little station, but could find no proof at all. The guard was sure there were

two passengers to alight, a lady and gentleman, but could in no wise identify either of them. Oddly enough, he never went near Miss Merton, nor sent her any particulars of the case. He had extolled his favourite in such extravagant terms that he was not inclined to listen to the comments she would be likely to make, and he waited for further developments before sending the announcement of the loss to the silent partner.

So a week went by. The learned and able counsel Mr. Sattontall had sent to Tristain's aid were even more puzzled than that gentleman himself.

"He is a very singular person, sir," said they. "We can make nothing out of him. And yet we are strangely impressed with his innocence of the act, and his knowledge of the true culprit. The only mission he gave us was to see if a certain person wore a moustache or not, and when we answered yes he clasped his hands as thankfully as if he had secured his own release."

"Who was that person?"

"He insisted that the name should not be mentioned."

Mr. Sattontall sighed, and walked away as disconsolately as if it were his own trial approaching.

When he reached the counting-house he found there a stout-framed young man, in neat, but unfashionable clothing, waiting for him.

"I have come to see my cousin, sir. I want to see Tristain Worth, if you please. I cannot understand the hints of the clerk," said the stranger, firmly but respectfully.

"Tristain Worth? I thought his name was Mr. Tristain. We have always known him by that name."

"It is Tristain Worth, and it has always been an honest name till now. My name is Joseph Worth. Can I see Tris?"

Mr. Sattontall coughed, hemmed, and rubbed his glasses vigorously.

"It is an unpleasant business, I am quite heart-broken by it; but Tristain Worth is in prison on a charge of theft and forgery."

"Tristain Worth a thief!" ejaculated Joe, straightening up, the fire blazing again in his faded eyes. "Come now, I won't hear that from any man. There doesn't breathe a truer soul on this earth than Tristain Worth's. If you'd have said Urban I'd have believed you."

"Urban? Who do you mean? the lawyer?"

"Yes, I believe he played the part of lawyer a little while, the villain. It's him I'm after; but he slipped out of my sight. I wanted Tris to tell me about his brother. Poor Tris! I'm sorry he's in trouble."

"His brother! Are they brothers? It can't be; why, I introduced them myself at my house."

"His brothers they are, sir, twin-brothers, but day and night aren't more unlike than they in nature, though they look alike when they're dressed alike, except for Urban's fine clothes and moustache."

"Moustache. Good heavens! have I found a clue?" cried Mr. Sattontall, catching Joe's rough, horny hand.

At this moment there was a quick, firm step, and a rustling without. Fierce, vehement, her cheeks glowing, Miss Merton walked into the counting-house.

"What is this I hear?" demanded she, imperiously; "only this morning has it come to my ears. How dared you keep it from me? Mr. Tristain arrested, in prison on charge of fraud and forgery! Tell me about it."

Mr. Sattontall gave the account, distinct and terse. "The time, the exact hour of the cashier's paying the draft?" demanded the haughty voice.

He gave it.

"Shameful, shameful charge," ejaculated she. "Take me at once to a magistrate, and let me swear to my testimony. I followed him to Green Lawn. I never lost sight of him for three hours or more—those exact hours, and the rest of the day my uncle was with him."

Mr. Sattontall caught both her hands, and kissed them joyfully.

"Blessings for ever upon you, Anna Merton," cried he.

Joe started and coloured.

"You are the lady poor Tristain loved, who was won away from him by Urban Worth," exclaimed he, eyeing her sternly.

"No," returned Miss Merton, warmly, "I was never won by Urban Worth. He can no more be compared to Mr. Tristain than a candle will outshine the sun."

Joe stared at her.

"There is some mistake then. Tristain thought so, and I heard Urban taunt him with it."

"There is some mystery between them. What is it?" asked she, quickly.

"They are brothers, twin-brothers, but the fine lawyer wouldn't allow Tristain to mention it. Urban is at the bottom of this trouble, be sure of that. He's always been a curse to Tris."

"Tell us your story," said Mr. Sattontall, placing a chair for Miss Merton.

She sat down, never turning her eyes from Joe's face. And Joe told the whole, in his simple but eloquent way.

He left nothing to be afterwards explained. The singular compact of the three farmers; the spendthrift, selfish son, supported by the hard earnings and dearly obtained savings; the honest, persevering workman at the iron-works, denying himself everything but bare necessities, to send back money to the pilfered home. As if by a magic spell all things were explained to them.

Miss Merton's face was drenched with tears. She rose from her seat, and took Joe's hand in hers.

"Heaven will comfort you," she said, "in return for this good deed of yours."

"And you don't love Urban then?" he asked, dubiously.

"I loathe, I despise, I abhor him."

"And you won't blame poor Tris?"

She blushed intensely.

Mr. Sattontall seized her in his arms, and kissed her with frantic glee.

"Why don't you answer, Anna Merton? There are opposite verbs from those you have used. Begin: I love—I admire—I adore him."

"But we are wasting precious time, while he languishes in prison."

"Come then. I will send for a carriage, and you shall ride from the office of the lawyer to the prison. You have earned the right to bring him back to me. Oh, how thankful I am that I can trust him still."

Tristain sat in the gloomy prison, with a pale, sad face. He had renounced hope from the beginning, seeing no escape from the web of circumstances woven about him. Only a vague suspicion could be brought forward in defence, and that he could not use.

He tried to be resigned, to bear, with that philosophy and religious faith which had cheered his other trials, this last grievous affliction. But it was hard, very hard. And mingled with his own sorrows was an intense anxiety about others, his parents, Urban, Joe, Rose, and, foremost and dearest of all, Anna Merton.

He was thinking of her with a strangely tender and yet renouncing love, when the prison door was opened, and like a fairy princess, or, better still, like the angel of his hopes, she glided in.

Her face was pale, but her eyes glowed and sparkled. What ineffably tender and happy smiles played around her lips. She came forward with outstretched, eager hands.

"Mr. Tristain," said she, "I have good news, and a magician's spell. I can grant all your wishes. What will you have first?"

He sprang up, confronting her with wild, beseeching eyes, demanding explanation.

"My good name; my unstained honour," answered he.

"It is yours. Not a speck is upon it. I have proved an alibi. I saw you at the station. My good angel sent me, and I never once lost sight of you. The testimony has been taken, my solemn oath recorded. What else?"

"Liberty," gasped Tristain, his strong limbs trembling like a babe's.

"Accept it. Go! nothing bars your way. Is there anything more?"

She spoke playfully, but the rich colour gathered in her cheek, and her proud eyes drooped.

Tristain seized her hand.

"Oh, if it were possible; if I dared to hope for it—if I were worthy of such bliss—"

"What wonderful thing can it be? Speak out, I pray you."

And now the long, dark lashes lay close upon her crimsoned cheek.

"Your love, Miss Merton—I believe I am mad, but something gives me hope. Oh, Miss Merton, if earth could be made such a Paradise!"

"Oh, blind, foolish Tristain, I have loved you from the first. It was only because of his likeness to you, that I was kind to your brother."

"My brother—you know, then, the whole disgraceful, shameful history?"

"I know your nobleness, herotam, and grand magnanimity; I ask nothing more."

Tristain's eye was flashing proudly, his head once more erect and stately.

"My angel! my queen!" said he, touching his lips reverently to the clinging hands. "And will Mr. Walter take me back to his confidence? Can I win a position worthy of you?" he asked.

"You may take me when you will. Oh, Tristain, I am too happy to be scrupulous and shy. Mr. Walter



loves you more dearly than ever. Come, he is waiting for us—let us go from this solemn spot—but stay, I can tell another secret here. Tristram dear, when you take me, there is another you must accept, a creature of care, and perplexity, and endless weariness. Do you guess? I mean—Anathema Mendon. Oh, Tristram, you must turn yourself into the silent partner."

"I should never have guessed it!" exclaimed Tristram, in astonishment. "Oh, Anna Merton, how dare I accept such a treasure?"

She laughed gleefully. "Tristram, all my bank stock, and capital in the iron-works would not buy for me such a true, noble heart as you have given. Will you set so poor a value on yourself as to weigh my gold against your manly character, and call it overbalanced?"

"No, my Anna, you are right, if I accept yourself, I accept a far more priceless treasure. Lead on, my ministering angel, out of prison, into liberty, joy, and sunshine."

#### CHAPTER XIV.

URBAN WORTH had borne this week of torture and suspense with outward bravado, but it had worn upon him terribly. His nerves were fearfully shaken, his eye was wild, his cheek haggard. He had given careless notice to his friends that the governor had ordered him off to New Zealand. And dressed with faultless elegance, wearing the false moustache, which no one suspected because it was so faithful a copy of the one he had been accustomed to wear, accompanied by one or two of his aristocratic friends, he went down and secured his passage in the steamer.

He had left his old boarding-house and taken private lodgings, taking care to keep them secret. He had only one great terror—the fear of Joe's appearance. Somehow, there was no fear in his mind about the bank draft. He knew how closely the web of circumstantial evidence was netted around his brother. He had heard from Eustace Sattontall every particular and had listened with outward indifference. Not that Urban was really entirely heartless. He said to himself, again and again, that once safe in New Zealand he would write a letter to Mr. Sattontall clearing Tristram entirely; and then, of course, poor old Tris would be taken back. He could not think of their last interview without a terrible feeling of remorse. He even sat down one day and wrote a letter—a wild, incoherent, but penitent letter, entreating his brother's pardon, and cursing his own weakness and the temptations which had been too strong for him. It was found afterwards in his writing-desk, and was of inexpressible comfort to his sorrowing friends.

Drink—not wine now, but brandy—lent him false strength and transient exhilaration, so that he lived through the torturing days, the horrible nights of suspense, before the steamer sailed. But it came at length. He opened his feverish eyes upon the morning light of that last day with a sudden freedom from the suffocating feeling that had oppressed him hitherto.

"To-night I shall sleep on board the steamer! I shall be on the path of freedom and a new life!" he exclaimed, and he sprang up with something like the old cheeriness on his face.

He remained indoors all the morning with a morbid terror of being assailed by Joe. He had given a false name to his landlady and fancied he was secure from being tracked by any means in Joe's power, especially since Tristram was locked securely in the prison. He had no hopes of Miss Merton now. A laconic note, received some days before, informed him there was no need for him to wait three months. Her answer could never be anything but respectful refusal.

It did not give him very keen disappointment. He had decided that England was no longer a safe home for him. Now there was nothing to embarrass his movements except Joe's appearance and the claims of Rose Henderson. To marry the hapless girl was the last of his intentions. He hated her with a morbid intensity, occasioned by the irritation of her claims and the dogged persistence of her champion. And in a few hours more he should be safe from her, from his father's remonstrance and anger, from his creditors, from Mr. Edgar's contempt, from all his past life.

Only a few hours and the sweeping waves of the ocean would bear him away from all this hateful experience. He locked his door, pulled down his curtains even, so terribly nervous of the suspicious eyes of Joe, only Joe, had he grown. And, taking a packet of cigars, with the unfailing brandy-bottle, he sat down to wear away the time till the close carriage came, which he had ordered to convey him to the wharf. He made up his mind that nothing should tempt him out of that room, or anywhere into the

street, until the carriage came. Secure thus far, he would run no risks of that accursed Joe.

What trifles turn the scale of mighty events! Joe, sent by Mr. Sattontall from the lawyer's office to the nearest livery-stable to procure a carriage to take Miss Merton to Tristram, while sitting in the office, waiting for the coach to be ready, heard the master say:

"Remember there's a carriage to—Street at three o'clock, to take that handsome young lawyer to the steamer. We shall lose a good customer with him. He was a fast fellow though, and will be likely to run out soon."

Joe, insanely sensitive on one point, asked:

"You don't mean Urban Worth, do you?" exclaimed he.

"Why, yes, I do. He's off for New Zealand. Do you know him?" he asked, in a tone of surprise as he glanced at Joe's person.

"Yes, I know him. I'll give him a parting call.—Street? Thank you. Send the carriage for the lady at once. I won't wait for it."

And Joe, turning round with a livid face that scared even the callous driver, standing whip in hand at the door, dashed away.

Urban, sitting there amid the blue clouds of tobacco smoke, with his watch on the table before him, drew one long sigh.

"Only one hour more," he said; "but every minute will seem like a day."

There was a peal at the door-bell. He flushed and paled, listening intently. A step came up the stairs. Instinctively he put one hand on the pistol which he had procured after Joe's last visit, and never parted with, by day or night, since.

The landlady herself put her head in at the door:

"A man at the door to see the young gentleman who lives here. He said something about a carriage."

"Oh!" gasped Urban, "they've forgotten the hour, stupid things! Send him up."

Urban took two or three careless steps towards the door to meet his visitor, but he staggered back and dropped nerveless into his chair as his eye fell upon the livid face and glittering eye which presented itself.

"Joe!" ejaculated his dry, trembling lips.

"Yes, Joe! and in good season to save a miserable wretch from sneaking away from the only righteous deed his wicked life will be able to present. Urban Worth, you may put back those trunks, and send off the carriage when it comes. You will not stir from this room until I accompany you, and then we shall go towards 'The Corner.' I swear to you, by everything holy, I won't lose sight of you till you are safely married to Rose Henderson."

"Do you dare to threaten me? I will call the police, and have you taken up."

"You are a pretty subject for the police! Where's Tristram, and whose knavery and trickery brought him to prison? I know you, Urban Worth! You are at the bottom of it, and I told Mr. Sattontall so. And Tristram's innocence is proved, and Miss Merton has gone to release him."

"Mr. Sattontall—Miss Merton? What do you mean?" faltered Urban.

"It doesn't make any difference. I don't want to talk about that. I'll leave it to Tris. It is about Rose I have to speak. I want to know if you will come with me peaceably; or if I shall have to drag you out there? for go you shall. Will you marry the girl you have ruined?"

Urban's hand moved nervously at his pocket. Then in a voice of eager pleading, he exclaimed:

"Why do you want me to marry her, Joe, when I don't like her? Marry her yourself. I tell you I'll make it worth your while."

Joe's wrathful face was answer enough.

Another peal at the bell, and again the summons without his door.

"The carriage, sir. The man says he came early, because you're liable to be detained at the wharf."

Urban wrung his hands. So near, and to lose the chance! So near, and to lose it!

"Joe, Joe," almost shrieked he, "let me go! Oh, I beg of you, let me go! I promise to mend. I'll send you money. I'll give you half I've got, this minute, and it isn't a small sum, Joe."

But Joe, inexorable as fate, waved him back. Alas! he did not know what grim presence was behind, or he might have spoken more forbearingly.

"I tell you, Urban Worth, you shall not stir a step. Cowardly knave! to save the honour of Rose, you shall stay. But for that, I should be thankful never to look upon your face again!" cried Joe, passionately.

Through the open door stared the landlady aghast and frightened.

Nerved to desperation, Urban pulled out his pistol.

"Stand back, Joe Worth! I swear to you I will

not be detained!" he shouted, in that clear, musical voice of his.

It was evident he only intended to frighten the young man, for, as Joe involuntarily stepped aside, Urban endeavoured to return the weapon to his pocket. His hands were weak, tremulous from excitement; his fingers—those long, white, delicate fingers—somehow caught in the spring. There was a report, sharp and stunning, and down at Joe's feet fell Urban Worth, dead, shot through the heart!

Can I tell how the shuddering Joe raised the lifeless form of the man he had hated so intensely, and over that cold, beautiful clay shed scalding tears of anguish and despair?

Late this mournful scene came Urban's wronged brother, his sad lesson and bitter grief tempering the joy and blissfulness of his happy love and restored honour.

"Oh, Tris, Tris, my last words were that I should not care to look again upon his face, but for Rose!" burst from Joe. "Was I pitiless and hard in my resentment? Heaven forgive me, if I were! I can only pity and grieve for him now."

"Dear Joe," answered Tristram, "learn the lesson that has helped me so much. Righteous indignation for wrong-doing is one thing, but revengeful anger is another."

He bent over the cold young face, with eyes too overclouded with tears to mark its perfect grace and beauty, to heed even the quiet, peaceful smile still hovering on the dead lips.

"Urban, my brother!" he murmured, "it will be the sweetest recollection of my lifetime that I was gentle and tender with you; that I kissed you at our last meeting, at our long, long parting."

And then he turned to Mr. Sattontall, who, with generous care, was hiding from the public eye all unpleasant knowledge of the unhappy affair.

"It is better so, sir. From my heart I am rejoiced that he is safe now from the temptations of this sinful world. He was so ill fitted to bear them, and his winning qualities, his brilliant gifts, only drew them closer around him. Thank heaven, it was an accident, not his own rash choice, to hurry thus into eternity. Read the letter I have found, confessing all, and you will be comforted as I am. You will find the money in this belt. Only a trifle is missing; that, you know, it will be my duty to repay. No one need know about it, need they?"

"No, Tristram. No one except the cashier of the bank and the policeman. They are both anxious to see you, and ask your pardon for their unkind suspicions."

"It was natural. I only marvel that you kept your faith in me, my kind, unfailing friend, my generous benefactor," answered Tristram, breaking down again from his forced composure.

Mr. Sattontall clasped his hand.

"Could I doubt honour and truth itself? I am almost sorry, lad, that you are beyond assistance of mine now. That silent partner, that terrible Anathema Mendon, will spoil you; I see it plainly."

"Where is she? where is Anna?" whispered Tristram.

"Down below, in the landlady's parlour, weeping bitterly for your trouble. She wants to go with you, whenever you take the body to the poor father and mother. She thinks she can comfort you in the great sorrow of that going home."

"Heaven bless her! she shall go. Joe must hasten to prepare them. Poor mother! he was her pride and darling. And my father will be smitten by a keener blow when he learns of his unfaithfulness. I wish it were possible to spare him that."

"Take my advice, Tristram; have no concealments from him. But others need not know. Every respect shall be paid to his memory; but tell your father the whole truth. And surely his wounded pride may be assuaged to know that if one son stumbled, the other has walked fearlessly and uprightly. Tristram, that fine old man in whom Joe interested us so warmly must learn to appreciate the partner of our silent partner, oh, Tristram!"

Poor Tristram was not ready to smile yet. The breaking of his melancholy news to that humble homestead lay heavy on his mind. No persuasion of his could induce Joe to go first.

"I can't. I can't, Tris! I feel as if I had helped to kill him. And, besides, there is Rose, poor Rose, to meet."

The steamer sailed, and Urban Worth did not cross the ocean. He had sailed out into a far more boundless sea; he had landed on the unknown shore. His silent form was borne forth on a slow and solemn journey, the last on earth. Tristram, with Anna Merton beside him, drove on swiftly, leaving the hearse to follow at its solemn pace.

As he came in sight of the well-remembered scene, now in the early beauty of spring, his feelings overpowered him, and he leaned back, pale and still, unable to speak a word. The soft, exquisitely mod-



## [AN ANGEL'S VISIT.]

lated voice of Anna Merten spoke soothing words of comfort and consolation; but Tristain could only press her hand in reply.

The men were all busy in the fields, and Tristain saw his father giving directions to the hired man about the ploughing in the ground near the roadside. He stopped his horse, and leaned out.

Captain Daniel turned round, looked at him sharply, and, laying down his whip, came hurrying out.

"Why no, it isn't Urban; it's Tris, as sure as I'm alive. Well, Tristain, my son, you are heartily welcome. Your mother will be glad to see how handsome you've grown. I never saw you look so much like Urban."

"This is Miss Anna Merten, father; the lady who is to honour me so much as to become my wife," said Tristain, sternly keeping command of his voice.

Captain Daniel gave a keen glance, and saw in the fair face the lady's nobility, the true aristocracy of heart, as well as of culture. He took off his hat, in a stately, old-fashioned bow, and stood bareheaded, the wind fluttering the gray locks over his forehead.

"I'm pleased enough to welcome you, young lady, and proud that my son has been so fortunate. Now if Urban were only coming too this would be better than any other pleasures. But the fat turkey will have to celebrate the day anyhow!"

He stood there, looking so pleased and glad, poor Tristain's heart failed him. He turned his head away in silence. Miss Merten's clear voice came to the rescue.

"I hope to enjoy many happy days here, sir. Tristain has told me about the place."

"He's a good boy, my Tristain. Maybe he hasn't had justice done him at home. He's worked against wind and tide, but he's come out bravely, certain sure. Come, Tristain, come up with the young lady to your mother."

"Father," began Tristain, "Urban is behind—"

And then he broke down, and sobbed outright.

"Sir," said Miss Merten, in her calm, soothing voice, "the Lord gave, and the Lord takes away. You surely recognize the beauty of submission. Urban is dead, and the hearse is coming behind us. It is a sudden and fatal accident."

Captain Daniel covered his gray head and caught the wheel of the carriage for support. For a few moments he said nothing, then he burst forth, wailingly:

"Oh, my handsome boy! But the Lord's will be done!"

He walked before them, and they followed slowly.

At the house door Tristain assisted Miss Merten out, and strangely enough it flashed across him how Urban had declared that nothing should tempt him to take her to the old farmhouse.

"Anna," said he, kissing her solemnly, "I have brought you to be a comfort to them in their affliction, and I know you will be all the earthly support I shall have."

Captain Daniel had gone into the house. A wild lamentation from within told them they were spared the pain of breaking the news to Mrs. Worth.

"Come and speak to Tristain and the young lady, mother," said Captain Daniel, chidingly. And Mrs. Worth, who never in her life had thought of disobeying him, put down her apron from her tearful face, and came forward. She kissed her only remaining son with quivering lips, and held out her hand to the lady.

"You won't blame me, I know; I can only be thinking of him," she faltered.

The hearse arrived soon, and the three families were gathered under one roof, in sympathy and sorrow.

It was not until the flower, pride, and hope of the Worth family was laid tenderly beneath the sod in the distant churchyard that Captain Daniel heard the true story of Urban's life. Even then it was softened by the veil of charity and pity. Mr. Sattontall had undertaken the task, and he was startled at the change in the old man when he had finished. The form which had been bowed beyond any weight of years, the face that had expressed such broken-hearted misery brightened and cleared. Captain Daniel threw off his great sorrow, and put away the robes of lamentation.

"The Lord has been merciful to me!" he exclaimed. "He has saved me from endless shame and remorse. Blind, misguided bigot that I was! I thought to lay out my plans, and move my men as if life were a game at chess, ruled by human wills. I have been taught a lesson I shall carry with me into my grave. I bless the hand of the Lord for removing that boy of mine before he had plunged deeper into crime. I thank Him on my bended knees for the brave son left me, who will repair the damages, who will heal the wounds of this misfortune."

He went out at once and found Tristain, and, putting both hands on his head, said, solemnly:

"The blessing of an old man be upon you, Tristain Worth. You have saved the old name from disgrace; you have brought it to higher honour. We deserved nothing at your hands, and you have given us everything. The Lord reward you, for I cannot!"

"I am more than rewarded now, dear father, since I see the heavy cloud lifted from your face. You are reconciled; you are resigned now to Urban's death?"

Anna Merten had come softly between them, her eyes filled with happy tears.

"I am, my son," returned Captain Daniel, solemnly.

"While I offer my thanksgiving for your faithfulness I bless the mercy which gives me Urban's grave to cover from sight the wrong-doing, the selfishness, the weakness I helped to foster. My child," he added, looking wistfully into Anna's face, "it is for you to reward this noble boy of mine. You will make him happy; you will not visit on him the deficiencies and shortcomings of his relations."

Anna smiled brightly through her tears.

"Indeed, sir, it will be my proudest remembrance that he came from this pure and honest home. If I can, I will help him to become hereafter the pride and boast of the family."

And so indeed it proved.

They were married in a short time, and their refined and luxurious home was a happy school wherein all their country relations learned useful and profitable lessons. Uncle Bob's pretty daughters both blossomed thence, fair brides to worthy young merchants. Mr. Samuel's pale, sickly girl became a constant and petted member of the family at the grand town mansion, and all three old men came freely, always sure of a welcome.

Only Joe kept aloof. There were painful memories for him, but time healed them over, and when the rolling years removed the old people, carried them glad and hopeful into the other and higher life, when the three farms became one again, under Joe's prosperous husbandry, it was an arrangement that there should be a visit in August from the wealthy relations, to be returned some time in December.

And what of Anna Merten, who had given so freely her large fortune, her noble heart and much-sought hand? Ah, there was no repentance. Tristain Worth expanded, in the genial atmosphere of prosperity, into such a noble, brave, grand character as he seldom met in life. To her latest hour his wife was proud, reverent, almost idolatrous of him. Mr. Sattontall was jubilant over his own sagacity, to the merriment of all concerned. He had one never-failing joke when Tristain teased him:

"Ah, you may be very wise now, but I cheated you finely once. If I hadn't been watchful, you would never to this day have had a chance to discover the 'silent partner.'"

THE END.





[AN UNPLEASANT COMMUNICATION.]

## CAPTAIN FRITTY.

### CHAPTER V.

"DORA, DORA, where have you hidden yourself? Pretty truant, come forth!" cried out Oswald Raymond, in a sportive tone, as he stood before the vine-hung arbour of a pretty garden, behind a handsome, substantial mansion.

And, receiving no response but a heavy sigh, the young gentleman drew aside a blossoming spray, and peeped in.

A woman, magnificently beautiful, notwithstanding her simple apparel, was sitting on a rustic bench, a tiny work-basket, with the finished pieces neatly folded in it, a book closed, but with a mark at its last perused page, beside her. Her hands were clasped, her eyes fixed in deep abstraction, with a look of pain and sorrow in their shining depths.

Oswald gazed silently, with keen appreciation of the charming picture, losing no detail of its peculiar attractions, from the wealth of rippling brown curls, knotted carelessly with a silver comb and tied with a blue ribbon with a silver edge, to the symmetrical shaping of the fair arm, the slender hand, the tiny glimpse of a bronze kid slipper, and the thoughtful grace of the noble countenance. His own face glowed with an expression the most stupid could hardly have failed to read, for, away from the observation of prying eyes, he allowed his heart to beam forth in his eyes.

"Dora," repeated Oswald, in a voice thrilling with respectful tenderness, and he stepped farther into the arbour.

She looked up now. The sorrowful look vanished for a moment, chased away by a glad, bright smile.

"You have arrived, Oswald. Indeed, you take us by surprise!"

"As I intended, my dear Dora. The professor is off for a scientific tour, and that gave me an extra week. I was by no means unwilling, I assure you."

He had taken her hand, and was bending down to kiss her, but, colouring deeply, she turned her head, though she tried to interpret the action playfully.

"No, no, Oswald. Will you always be so wild and foolish? Where did you find your mother?"

"I haven't seen her yet. They told me at the lodge she had gone to the house, but that you were in the arbour. So I rushed here at once. Please to tell me why I may not have my kiss. Have you turned me away from your good graces?"

"No, oh no. But—"

"Well?"

She conquered her embarrassment, raised her eyes suddenly, looked steadily into his, and answered, proudly:

"Because I am only a poor dependant upon your mother's bounty, and because you are not an old gentleman, and because Miss Annabel Wilton is invited here next week, in honour of your coming. Now, sir, you have your answer. You must forget all my childish acts. During this last half-year of your absence I have studied propriety and decorum, and discovered that, though we may cherish an innocent brotherly and sisterly affection, the world will cavil and malign."

"What utter nonsense," exclaimed Oswald, his brow darkening a little, while he bit his lip impatiently. "Who is going to be ruled by the hard, sordid, deceitful codes of the world? Forget your old, childish ways indeed, when I found them so unspeakably delightful and refreshing. Now look here a moment, Dora; I think I see through all this. They told me at the lodge that Aunt Jane had gone with my mother. Aunt Jane is staying here. It is she who has been putting all this into your head. I can see her prim looks, her insinuating gestures, and hear all her cruel words, her little stabs, with 'my dear' and 'dear child' interspersed the oftener when she is hurting you the most. If Aunt Jane wasn't my mother's sister—What is the use of minding her? I shall not, I promise you, if you will only let her conversation pass by you like the idle wind, as you will, won't you, Dora?"

Dora was looking down still, with a grave expression on her face.

"The meddlesome old maid! I wish I knew all she said," exclaimed the young man, watching the beautiful face with yearning tenderness; "it must have been very serious indeed that you should be willing to spoil my coming home with your grave looks, and to destroy all my pleasure, Dora."

"Destroy your pleasure, Oswald? Oh, no, I would never do that if I could help it. I would bear anything, endure everything," exclaimed she, with suppressed vehemence.

"Then smile upon me like my own affectionate, guileless Dora, my peerless Amphitrite, and tell me everything that has made you look so sad."

He took up the work-basket and the book to make room for him on the seat, and sat down beside her.

She darted a glance of almost idolatrous adoration into his face, then lowered her eyelids, and answered, quietly:

"I will not be silly any more, Oswald. I will not spoil your pleasure upon your visit home for a thou-

sand Aunt Jane's, not for a whole world of censuring gossips. You, at least, would give me credit for being innocent of any ambitious designs, because I am grateful for your goodness to me, because I appreciate and admire your superiority to anyone else I have met here."

"Do you know that you have changed, or rather improved in these six months, still more than the last, Dora?" said Oswald, willing to relieve her from farther discussion of the subject. "I don't wonder my mother can no longer hide her lily, since its beauty and fragrance are all-pervading. Let me make an honest confession, my Amphitrite. I was quite maddened with jealousy one day at the London Clubroom, by hearing a group of young aristocrats discussing, in extravagant terms of flattery, the new star which Jasper Eyre had discovered down here by Raymond Terrace. I pricked up my ears you may be sure at the names, but could not believe it was meant for you, until the name was spoken in full."

He paused, for the girl had started up, magnificent in her haughty beauty as a very Zenobia. Her lip curled, her eye flashed.

"And did they dare to use my name in that public place? Ah, this is because I am a poor girl, unknown, and friendless. Had I been one of your nobly born ladies would they have dared to insult me so? Sir Jasper shall feel my scorn if he presumes to offer me his odious compliments."

"Then do you know Sir Jasper, Dora, dear? Do not quiver like a wounded fawn. You had a friend; I bounded into the group, with, I suspect, the air of an enraged lion, for they all started back, and looked as discomfited as a group of whipped terriers; I asked them if they were aware they were making too free a use of a young lady's name in a public room, and that the same young lady was under my mother's protection, and consequently a charge of mine. One of them, a contemptible scion of nobility, with no virtues and few brains, began to bluster a little. He turned to Jasper, who stood with lowering brows and discomfited air at a little distance, and asked him who this meddlesome fellow might be. I spared Jasper the trouble of answering. 'I will tell you,' said I; 'I am Sir Jasper Ayre's cousin, and Mrs. Ralph Raymond's son, and but that his mother was a twelve-month older than mine I should have been Sir Oswald Ayre, and in that case you would probably have allowed my right to call you to account, as, mark me, will be done if I hear that lady's name again in a place like this.'"

"You said all this!" cried the girl, her whole face glowing with delight.

"I did; why not, my little Dora? I gave them a lesson, though it should last but a little time."

There were tears on her long eyelashes. "Ah, Oswald, it were, worth being wrecked and nearly drowned to have become acquainted with a character like yours, so generous, noble, and brave. So—"

He put his hand playfully on her tremulous lips. "That is enough, little enthusiast. I wish I was half what your partial affection avers."

"I hope Miss Wilton will appreciate you. Oh, Oswald, I hope and pray she will make you as richly happy as you deserve."

"Miss Wilton, what has she to do with me?" he asked, in an impatient tone.

"Dear Oswald, you cannot be ignorant of your father's earnest wishes, your mother's anxious hopes, not even, I think, of the lady's expectations."

"So you have been won over to the side of my persecutors. I did not think you would be one to favour this absurd arrangement," he said, reproachfully.

"Why not, I pray you?"

"Because, after your singular childhood—your very peculiar experiences, you should not be capable of imbibing worldly notions. Oh, Dora, don't let them make you a woman of fashion, of propriety, of intolerable stupidity. There are plenty of such in our world, hundreds modelled after one pattern. Let me keep my fervent, enthusiastic, truthful-hearted Dora."

"I have learned a great deal in these two years, have I not, Oswald? I have not told you the deepest cause of my melancholy. Do you forget the date of this day? It is two years ago this very morning since I was lifted to the steamer's deck, since your mother took me to her generous heart. Two entire years, Oswald. I have been looking back upon it. My life before seems like a dream, and these two years a lifetime of reality. I was thinking of what hopes I cherished then—what grand visions I had of discovering the secrets of my seclusion there. Alas, I have grown wiser since my acquaintance with the world; that revelation would only overwhelm me with shame. I have even ceased to long for it."

Her head was drooping, with a sort of noble humility; a sweet, pensive smile hovered around her lips.

"Dora," exclaimed the young man, "my Aunt Jane has poisoned your happy, beautiful life here at Raymond Terrace. Her hateful insinuations have pierced in all directions. I will speak to my mother about it. She shall not remain."

"No, no, Oswald. Indeed, indeed, you are wrong. Miss Ayre only indirectly showed me my true position. Your mother has been so kind; you have been so generous and good that I was almost forgetting I was only a nameless waif cast upon your charity—that I had no real claim here."

"You have the best and highest of all claims, Dora, that of genuine worth and truest affection. Dora darling, it is idle for me to seek to hide it, you are the ideal of all my fondest visions, the object of my heart's most holy devotion. I love you, Dora, beyond a brother's love. Don't let me startle you; I meant to have broken it gently, and to have given you, moreover, a fair trial of others; but it has escaped me now. It is the dearest hope of my heart to win your love, and keep you here at the Terrace as my wife. Do not consider yourself bound in any way by what I have said. If you meet with one who can win from you a more ardent affection you will receive my most fervent blessing upon the union, though it may lacerate my very heart's core in giving it. But you will understand my sentiments, you will know what awaits you, if you will."

The girl's face was suffused with crimson; there were marks of intense grief in the lines gathering on her smooth forehead, the scalding tears rushed to her eyes.

"Don't, Oswald, don't say it!" cried she, in a suffocated tone; "don't tell me that your love is anything but a brother's."

"Why not, Dora?" asked Oswald, gently.

"Because, because—Oh, I would rather have perished there, engulfed in that horrible whirlpool of eddying waves than live to cause so much grief and pain to your parents. Oswald, Oswald, forget all you have said; how can it be true? you so noble and gifted, so fitted for the grandest lady in the land, for you to love a poor, unknown, unfitted girl like me—you will forget it speedily. I will be your truest friend, your loving sister, but I will never give such a blow to your prospects and your mother's hopes as to consent to be your wife."

He took her outstretched hands, one in each of his.

"My Dora," said he, "which can best bear a blow, my prospects, or my heart? But if your own affec-

tions are already engaged, I will not speak a single word of remonstrance or entreaty. Besides, what are really my prospects?"

"Very brilliant, if you marry Miss Wilton, whose fortune will support your old name," answered Dora, averting her eyes, and speaking steadily, but with suppressed emotion. "You will stand as a member for the county, go to parliament, and be great and famous. You will be able to rebuild the Terrace, in the style of your ancestors. You will have fame and fortune, and your country will profit by your talents and rectitude."

"And I myself—my own heart, my home—Go, on with the picture, Dora."

"It cannot help being good, pure, and happy if you are in it. They tell me hearts can be safely consulted. That everyone has some youthful romance, which they laugh at afterwards. Miss Wilton is pretty, good, and accomplished. If you marry her you will fulfil your parents' highest hopes; secure what you confessed to me long ago as to be your ambition, a place in the nation's council. Oh, Oswald, it must be so, for the other picture is terrible."

"I can't agree with you, Dora. It has been my constant endeavour during the past year to fit myself for a life of independence as well as usefulness. Why, I pray you, may I not satisfy the claims of my heart as well as those of my ambition; or, better still, the conscientious desire to make the most of the talents given me?"

"But you are not fitted for the coarser details of life; they would destroy your power."

Oswald laughed. "I know where you learned that speech, Dora. It sounds so much like Aunt Jane that I can almost see her prim lips as they pronounce the words."

"Nevertheless, there is truth in it. I can see it. You know that the place here is not entirely clear. If your father dies the yearly annuity falls. I can see how painfully embarrassing the situation might be for you. I cannot wonder that your father is so anxious for your marriage with Miss Wilton—your mother so painfully solicitous concerning the matter. Oh, Oswald, if you cannot imagine their consternation and grief at the idea of your throwing away these brilliant prospects for the sake of a friendless, penniless girl like me, I can, and I shrink in horror from the very idea."

The young man's forehead was clouded.

"It would be very agreeable if you had a good fortune, Dora, I admit, or if I had an income of my own; but, since that is not the case, I must even make the best of it. I shall never marry Miss Wilton, Dora, nor give her encouragement for expecting it. That question is settled, whatever your sentiments may be."

Dora looked wistfully into his face, and then sighed:

"But men change in a very short time. What seems impossible at one time may at another be easy and desirable. Their nature is more changeable than a woman's."

"Another of Aunt Jane's sayings. She has really found an apt pupil," observed Oswald, a little impatiently. "Pray use your own judgment, Dora; I assure you it is more accurate and sensible. Once for all allow me to declare that in this matter there will be no change in my sentiments. As I said before, if you would return my affection, and one of us came into a fortune, it would be exceedingly agreeable; but, without it, I think it is still possible for us to be far happier than many a wedded pair whose brows are bound with coronets. I do not press this question, Dora, because I wish to be generous to you. This season will draw you out of your seclusion, and you will be likely to make the acquaintance of a great many gentlemen, for my mother hinted in her last letter that she intended to introduce you this summer, when our rural town will be gay with London company. I will not deny that I trembled a little for my fond hopes, and yet I was glad too. I do not enjoy suspense. It seems you already know Sir Jasper."

Her head was arched haughtily again.

"Yes, sir. I could not help meeting him when he came down to Ayre Hall. Mrs. Fordyce was taken ill at the Hall, and her son came down to see her, and I was there one day with your mother, and was then introduced."

"And I'll warrant he did not let slip the chance of farther acquaintance. He was taken with a sudden interest in his long-neglected relatives at Raymond Terrace. He brought bouquets and hothouse fruit from the hall, new books, and all that sort of thing. Sir Jasper understands the art thoroughly, and he is decidedly the handsomest man of my acquaintance. I wonder how he acted that I find you quick and haughty with your eyes at the mention of his name."

Mr. Oswald Raymond fixed his eyes on her face while he made this speech. The same haughty in-

dignation was still curving her delicate nostril and curling her lips.

"I do not like Sir Jasper, but then again I am somehow drawn towards him by a sort of pitiful compassion. I seem to have a dual nature when he is talking to me. One is angry, resentful, haughtily mindful of some unknown injury he has done or proposed, and the other grieving over something which belongs to me. I try to remember the injurious influences of flattery and a high position like his, and not blame him too much for being so different from you, Oswald. Indeed, before I saw him I told your mother I knew I could never forgive him for coming between you and the title and estate, and I find that I was right. For Sir Jasper is selfish, wild, and I suspect unprincipled. I have discovered so much in my short acquaintance. Hark! there is your mother's voice and Miss Ayre's. Go, Oswald, I beseech you, and leave me here! I wish you had not come first to me."

"Delightful Aunt Jane!" muttered Oswald. "She has managed nicely to spoil the dearest pleasure of my visit home."

But he went slowly from the arbour and was shortly at the avenue gate, where the ladies were talking with the gardener.

Left alone, Dora dropped her head wearily into her hands.

"He loves me! Oswald loves me! And I must hide from him the wild, insane joy with which my heart responds to his. I must dash down this draught of bliss for which my lips parch as the desert-bound traveller thirsts for a drop of water. Oh, it is worse than for a drowning man, having once gained a friendly deck, to plunge back again into the seething vortex of foaming waves. But it must be done. I acknowledge to my own heart that it is my solemn duty. Shall I allow his love for me to alienate him from his friends—to ruin all his prospects in the world? No, no! better that I should allow my sorrow to eat away my heart, and, like the Spartan, bear it in smiling silence. Shall I so ungratefully repay the generous, fostering care which has made these two years seem like the fairy visions I used to picture in that island prison? No, Oswald, no; though your tender words may thrill every nerve, though your fond entreaties may pierce me to the heart, I shall find strength to deny, to withstand you."

She remained some time longer lost in painful musings, then arose, took up her work-basket, and walked slowly back to the house.

Miss Jane Ayre, the sister of Mrs. Raymond, also of Mrs. Fordyce, whose son had inherited the grandfather's title and estates, met Dora in the hall.

She was a lady who prided herself on her gentle blood and old family, and whose unprepossessing looks and still more disagreeable disposition, had left her blooming or fading, alike unmolested by suitors, notwithstanding the comfortable income, which would only cease with her life, might have tempted some unscrupulous mind.

She had taken a deep aversion to her sister's protégé, not more on account of her unknown humble parentage than for her youth and surpassing beauty. Miss Jane was seldom tolerant to youthful belles, even if they were wealthy and well born, while upon those who lacked both dowry and lineage she vented doubly distilled venom.

She had been visiting a relative in a remote county, and had only made her appearance at the Terrace prior to a lengthy stay with Mrs. Fordyce at Ayre Hall, and in these few days had dexterously managed to make poor Dora more miserable, unhappy, and troubled in mind, than the girl had believed possible among her kind friends.

"Oh, my dear, so you have come. You had your work with you, I see. That was very proper, and eminently desirable. I hope all those garments are finished. My sister is so easy and thoughtless she neglects her own interest shamefully. I was astonished at her seamstress's bill. She really ought not to pay for a stitch of work outside of this house. It ought to be done by someone. The housekeeper, of course, can't be expected to do it, nor Joanna, but I do hope, Dora, you will manage it. Your wages are generous; I am sure, you dress so well."

"Wages," echoed Dora, flushing crimson, "indeed, Miss Ayre, wages has never been talked of between us. I know how generously I am treated. I try, indeed I do try, to deserve it. Mrs. Raymond has been more like a mother than a mistress."

"Oh, yes, I daresay. She is so easy—she wouldn't hurt a fly. Well, well, I hope you'll deserve it as you say you will. Mr. Oswald has come, did you know it?"

"Yes, I know it."

The sharp gray eyes were searching the downcast face.



"You have seen him? He came to the harbour, I suppose?"

"Yes."

Dora's voice was almost inaudible, for the suffocating feelings in her throat were intense, and she would rather have died than to have given vent to them.

"What did he say?" asked Miss Ayre, in an acrimonious tone.

"Really, Miss Ayre, I should not be so dishonourable to Oswald as to repeat his private conversation even if I could remember it," she said, roused to a little indignation.

Miss Jane's steel gray eyes assumed a cold glitter, and she made a mock-ceremonious bow.

"I understand perfectly, Miss Dora. I can readily imagine the nature of the conversation. It was undoubtedly very becoming and decorous. Mark you, girl, if you think your wheedling arts can win a foolish, generous-spirited young man to disgrace his family and ruin himself, I warn you of the mistake; you will come off defeated and ashamed. I have heard something which makes me suspect your audacity has gone still farther. You are trying for game with a double trap. If you cannot obtain Sir Jasper, you mean to secure Oswald. It is well there is one member of this proud old family to watch and save their noble name from disgrace."

She broke off abruptly, for Dora raised her head, flashed upon her one burning, angry, annihilating glance, and walked away with the air of an injured princess.

"Oh," murmured Dora, burying her burning face in the pillows of her bed, "what a child I was two years ago. I thought freedom to mingle with the world meant perfect happiness. Alas, alas!"

#### CHAPTER VI.

AYRE HALL was the grand place of the town, the country seat of the proud old family which had ruled the *côte* of the whole county.

It was a massive stone building, with a tower at either wing, quaint gables, dormer windows in the upper and elaborately cut lancet windows below in the second storey, while the building on the ground floor had a broad verandah running around from tower to tower, supported by clusters of Doric pillars, and here and there a buttress, with impish figures carved in stone, and heavy mouldings, of a dark, rich gray from years of exposure to the weather, that formed a noble picture, framed as it was by the magnificent oaks in the rear, of which the Ayres might pardonably be proud.

There were only two left to bear the name—Miss Jane, a discontented, unhappy spinster, who had a life annuity paid from the estate, and the young heir, Sir Jasper Ayre, whose birth the old baronet had not lived to see.

He had died somewhat sorely troubled concerning the estate, and a little indignant at the fate which had sent him no son to inherit the title. The Ayres were all plain-featured, and somewhat lacking in outward grace. Both daughters had chosen to fall in love with men rather famous for their good looks, but penniless. Old Sir Hugh would not have minded the lack of fortune had either of them been able to make it up in ability or genius.

But Mr. James Fordyce, though a brilliant man in society, was too wilful and selfish to exert himself enough to win a distinguished position in the political world. He was fond of hunting, boating, racing, or being praised by the men as a good fellow, and flattered by the women for his handsome looks, which were indeed far beyond the average attainment, but he had no inclination for any wiser employment of his time.

Ralph Raymond, on the contrary, was a shy, poetic dreamer, a close student, happiest always in the seclusion of his dearly loved library; a far better man, a more exemplary and tender husband, than it was possible for Mr. James Fordyce to be, even in his best moments. But he had never pleased his father-in-law, who heartily despised what he called womanish softness, and monkish nonsense.

So when the old baronet came to lie upon his death-bed his mind could not forget its anxious following of worldly interests. His youngest daughter had one child, a boy of two years, but he had his father's face, and it annoyed Sir Hugh to think he might inherit the same dreamy nature. Therefore he turned with even more feverish anxiety than the Fordyces themselves towards the expected birth of the child, so long vainly hoped for. If it were a son, it should be the heir to all the fine old estate, the inheritor of its title and fortune.

If a daughter, there would only be a meagre legacy, not quite one fourth of Sir Jasper Ayre's income, and the little son of the Raymonds would be Sir Oswald Ayre.

No wonder the event was waited for with feverish

interest by both families, and that a slight coolness grew up between the sisters. Sir Jasper was born, carried to receive the blessing of his dying grandfather, and Oswald sank back again into obscurity, with only the fortunes of a common gentleman.

Poor Mrs. Raymond was at the grand christening of the little baronet, and did her best to seem cheerful and cordial in her congratulations, but, after that event, there was very little intimacy between the two families.

Mr. James Fordyce, indeed, seemed more reluctant to meet the Raymonds than these poor relations objected to being treated contemptuously by the grand people of the Hall. Against Oswald, especially, the haughty, handsome Mr. Fordyce seemed to have an especial antipathy, and scarcely ever met him without an involuntary frown contracting his jetty eyebrows. It may be that the meek, submissive wife, who still, in a weak sort of manner, adored his fine person and brilliant face, discovered this sentiment, and tacitly allowed the town visits to lengthen, and the summers at the Hall to dwindle shorter and shorter. And when they were fairly in sight of Raymond Terrace, after the first formal call, the sisters rarely met; Miss Jane Ayre, to be sure, was a sort of link between them, and yet this scarcely helped them to closer intimacy.

At the Hall the worthy spinster discussed all the deficiencies and shortcomings of the Terrace, and at the Terrace she relieved her mind by what she was pleased to term "that silly Henrietta's folly and meekness," and the overbearing haughtiness and independence of Mr. James Fordyce. Of the heir, Miss Jane had not so much to complain. She shared the weakness of her sisters, and was heartily proud that, at last, there was an Ayre whose beauty of person adorned his rank. Sir Jasper was like a youthful Adonis, even the rival whom he had superseded at his very birth acknowledged that he was one of the handsomest men he had ever seen. He had all his father's splendid vitality, and his fine, commanding features, with another expression which was not belonging to a Fordyce, nor yet an Ayre, a bright, keen intelligence, an arch vivacity, that was scarcely like his own nature, but more an inherited gift from another branch.

People closely known to the family sometimes remarked as a peculiarity in Mrs. Fordyce that while she had every reason to be proud and fond of her son, she seemed to shrink from any manifestation of affection, and at times almost shivered beneath some light, caressing touch of his.

"He is too like his father to please her," said Aunt Jane, shaking her head mysteriously. "Though she tries to cheat us all, and carries a bold front, Henrietta has found out the cruel, reckless, tyrannical nature of James Fordyce, and it sickens her to see his looks in Jasper. But for all that, the lad ought not to be blamed."

Mr. James Fordyce was pacing to and fro on the green bank below the verandah, on that same day that Oswald Raymond returned to the Terrace from the dusty office, where he was studying law with a celebrated legal gentleman of good family as well as talents.

Mr. Fordyce was smoking slowly and luxuriously, lingering over every whiff of the costly cigar, imported expressly for his own use. A rich, eastern dressing-gown, with heavy tassels of dead gold, was wrapped around his figure without hiding its fine proportions. His slippers were of black velvet, with buckles set in gems.

He carried in one white, shapely hand a handkerchief, fine and daintily perfumed, and his linen was faultless in its getting up, and embroidered with extreme fineness.

A modest, but costly diamond ring on the finger, a glimpse beneath the brocade folds of the dressing-gown showing a watch-chain of wondrous intricacy, and a marvel of opal and diamond for brooch, betraying the gentleman's taste for a genuine article in jewellery.

Mr. Fordyce had good taste in dress, and he loved to adorn his fine person, and surround himself with becoming adornments.

You would have declared that the pale, plain, worn-looking woman, who presently threw open a French window, and came out to meet him, was old enough to be his mother, so differently had they carried the same number of years.

Poor Mrs. Fordyce was one of those who only seem more plain and common-place amidst elegancies. No art of milliner or dress-maker could make her look youthful, pretty, or graceful. The time had been when with feverish impatience she had attempted it, but, whatever personal charms she had lacked, Henrietta Fordyce had plenty of common sense. When she saw that the diamond necklace and ear-rings made her lustreless gray eyes look dead and cold, that the richly tinted velvet and satin showed her complexion and made her stunted

form look dowdyish, she put them aside. Heaven alone could see with what heroism she stifled all resentment and bitter grief. She dressed herself only in neutral shades, and in the least ostentatious manner, and tried to content herself with the applause which her handsome husband received in whatever circle they passed. I do not say that she found in this shallow substitution much genuine satisfaction, as wives who have profound respect and esteem mingled with their admiration ought; for Henrietta Fordyce had too acute and clear a mind not to pierce beneath the handsome exterior, and see how poor and base a spirit lay beneath. But she endeavoured to seem content, and went on her way uncomplaining. The woman's pride was her salvation. But for that she had sunk at once before a ghost which haunted her day and night, the vague, indefinable, and yet terribly real ghost of suspicion, a terror which grew before her visibly into more and more menacing proportions.

She came out noiselessly and quietly, and waited a moment, glancing sharply at the handsome, indolent face before she spoke.

"You did not come in to see me last night, James, as I asked you."

He started, turned around swiftly, and discovering who the intruder was returned to his cigar.

"No, I believe I didn't. I went off with Irwin to see that new hunter of his, and then we rode round to Ascot, and stopped at the Huntsman for a game supper."

"I wish to speak with you. Can you come in now while my bond is free from intruders?"

He shrugged his shoulders, ran off his white fingers through his still glossy, curling hair, and puffed away.

"I do enjoy a smoke out here, and I've only had one cigar. I can hear, can't I? talk away."

She bit her lip, a little flush crossed her pallid cheek, and then faded, leaving it grayer in its hue than ever.

"I am not in the habit of speaking on personal topics in such an exposed spot as this, James. I insist that you come with me into the house. What I have to say will not delay you long; but it must be spoken in private. You have plenty of time and cigars both on your hands, and this affair is pressing."

As she spoke in a tone that was singularly blended with haughtiness and pleading, Mrs. Fordyce moved towards the house.

Her husband threw down the cigar with an angry exclamation, and followed her, his countenance clouding over with sullenness, and resentment.

Mrs. Fordyce sat down on an ottoman in the elegant little room, opposite the great easy-chair, into which the gentleman had flung himself. Her face grew almost ghastly, and one hand was pressed tightly against her heart, as she drew out a letter from the portfolio on the table, and held it up to him.

"Mr. James Fordyce, have you ever seen this handwriting before?"

He looked up carelessly, a contemptuous smile on his lips. She had so often discovered cause for jealousy, he did not think the accusation worthy of denial. But the moment his eye fell upon the rude straggling superscription his expression changed. His lip curled with a ferocious sneer of deadly anger, his eye flashed, his whole face was convulsed with agitation.

A sickly smile shone a moment over her pale, plain features.

"I see that the man states the truth. He has applied to you, and his letters have been cast aside."

"Let me see the letter," demanded Mr. Fordyce "how dare he apply to you?"

"Because you deny him an interview, that is what he says. I may judge, since so much is the truth, that the rest of his statement can be relied upon."

Her voice was cold and hard, and but for that hand pressed convulsively against her heart, she betrayed no sign of the pain which was almost agony.

"Well, really, how should I know, since you don't give me the letter. I think myself he is an unmitigated scoundrel trying to extort money."

"He talks about proofs, and threatens an exposure which will cover this house with shame and disgrace. Can it be done?"

Mr. James Fordyce roused himself to retort, angrily:

"You know as well as I do that exposure would injure you and me. I don't see that anything is gained by your pretending ignorance."

"I do; heaven knows I do," answered the woman, hoarsely. "I was a weak dupe in your hands, a poor, confiding, submissive woman. For that I have had my punishment. But this letter from this person—"

"The fiends take him! He holds on like a leech! I thought I should shake him off by bravado, and

feigned ignorance of his meaning. But it is plain to see that he is in earnest. He thought to punish me through you. Curse the meddling fool! I suppose I shall have to see him, and find out how much he really knows."

Mrs. Fordyce had been looking at the letter, a ghastly terror depicted on her face. Her voice was scarcely audible as she asked:

"But there is something more in this letter. This child he knew, who was supported by your annuity, who was she?"

The man looked at her with an uneasy, shrinking eye, and did not answer.

"Oh, my heart!" gasped Mrs. Fordyce. "I think it has grown prophetic. Answer me, James Fordyce, with all the others was I cheated too? This girl, who was she?"

"Curse the meddling fool!" again hissed he, in a furious voice, half rising from the chair, as if to escape from the room.

She put out both her hands with a gesture that did not lack dignity, if it were without grace. A stern resolution ennobled the poor pale face.

"Stay! you shall not go yet. For once I will command you. You shall answer me this question, and answer me truly. The child you told me was dead revived—lived! It was this same girl. Speak, and answer me."

He was for a moment cowed beneath her eye.

"Yes, Henrietta. If I deceived you it was to save your peace of mind. You know there was no other course to be taken," he said, coaxingly.

Her lip curled in deadly scorn.

"My peace of mind! As if that had been your care in any way, at any time. You knew rather that the knowledge of that little heart beating with life would have robbed you of your dups, your poor, weak tool. My peace of mind, indeed! With the knowledge of one monstrous wrong stabbing me day and night, with the miserable alienation of our lives, now comes this deadliest of all blows. Oh, pitiful heavens! where are your avenging bolts—your releasing ministers of death?"

She clasped her hands against her breast and began walking to and fro across the room. Presently she paused, and tossing him the letter said, sternly:

"Read what he says there, and tell me if it be all true—if the poor, wronged child is really gone from the reach of our restitution, and beware lest you deceive me."

He read the letter carefully, and, folding it up, put it in his pocket. By this time he had in a measure recovered his self-possession, if not his accustomed nonchalance.

"I should say the fellow has managed to ascertain something very near the truth. I can show you a letter with a date of something like two years, which changed my determination to take a trip across the ocean. It gives the account of that hapless creature's death."

"Hapless, indeed! And yet it was bliss in comparison with the torture of a life like mine," moaned the lady.

"I must see the fellow, that is plain. How much money can you help me with, if he demands a large sum to keep him quiet?"

The poor woman wrung her hands, and answered, wildly:

"Oh, what a retribution! Does all sin receive deadly punishment like this? Money, place, power, honour, for these things we perilled our very souls. And the very attainment brings its avenging powers. Our money is all remorselessly demanded to hide us from ruin. Our high position will but make the horror of a fall more deadly. Our honour! Oh, the miserable whited sepulchre that it is! James Fordyce, have you no remorse when you think of all these things, that you have thriven, been gay, smiling, and satisfied, while I have seemed to feel my very flesh shrinking in loathing and horror, dwindling before the remembrance of a deed that I only allowed, while you planned and executed it?"

He looked at the ghastly, quivering face, the dull eyes gleamed with horror, the thin, stunted form trembling as in a tempest blast, and said, coldly:

"I am not apt to go into hysterics. And I would commend you, Henrietta, to go to bed, and let your girl bring you an opiate. When the thing is done, why not make the best of it? I'll see the man and quiet him some way."

"Yes, yes, he must be quieted," repeated she, dimly.

"Raise all you can, then; it's lucky Jasper hasn't come of age yet, or we should find more trouble. He wouldn't consent to this steady drain, unless he knew," replied her husband.

"Will you answer his letter?"

"No; I should not be so foolish as to commit myself in that way. I'll find a way to see him myself. You might get a little money out of Jasper."

"But, oh, that child, that child!" Had you no single throb of compassion for me, that you denied me that little ray of comfort I might have obtained from knowing and loving her?"

"What nonsense you talk! How could any such risk have been run?" returned he, testily.

"You incur risks for wrong-doing. I would have ventured much for a right impulse. But it is too late now, too late!"

She sat down in the chair, and dropped her head upon her hands, murmuring:

"Oh, what unutterable bliss to have obtained the love of one innocent creature."

"You can love Jasper," sneered Mr. Fordyce, growing angry again as he watched her. "I am sure it would be very becoming in you to love him a little better."

Her voice was dry and husky as she answered him:

"No, I cannot love Jasper! You know I cannot, and wherefore, without my telling you."

Mr. Fordyce coloured a little beneath her stern glance, and, turning, walked abruptly from the room. A bitter smile played a moment across her face, and then her head dropped wearily again as she moaned:

"Oh, mocking, mocking misery of life! My sister there, in her peaceful, happy home, sharing her husband's confidence and affection, loving and beloved by her noble boy, envies me, believes me set on a pinnacle of grandeur far above her humbler fate. If she could only know—if she could only know."

(To be continued.)

## I'LL WAIT FOR YOU.

"AND so you want to marry my daughter, young man," said Farmer Blifkins, removing the pipe from his mouth, and looking at the young man sharply from head to foot.

Despite his rather indolent, effeminate air, which was mainly the result of his education, Luke Jordan was a fine-looking fellow, and not easily moved from his self-possession; but he coloured and grew confused beneath this sharp, scrutinizing look.

"Yes, sir, I spoke to Miss Mary last evening, and she—she referred me to you."

The old man's face softened.

"Mary is a good girl, a very good girl," he said, stroking his chin with a thoughtful air, "and she deserves a good husband. What can you do?"

The young man looked rather blank at this abrupt inquiry.

"If you refer to my ability to support a wife, I can assure you—"

"I know you are a rich man, Luke Jordan, but I take it for granted that you ask my girl to marry you, not your property. What guarantee can you give me, in case it should be swept away—as in thousands of instances—that you could provide for her a comfortable home? You have hands and brains—you know how to use them? Again I ask you, what can you do?"

This was a style of catechism for which Luke was quite unprepared, and he stared blankly at the questions without speaking.

"I believe you managed to get through college—have you any profession?"

"No, sir; I thought—"

"Have you any trade?"

"No, sir! My father thought that, with the wealth I should inherit, I should not need any."

"Your father thought like a fool, then. He'd much better have given you some honest occupation and cut you off with a shilling—it might have been the making of you. As it is, what are you fit for? Here you are, a strong, able-bodied young man, twenty-four years old, and never earned a pound in your life! You ought to be ashamed of yourself. And you want to marry my daughter," resumed the old man, after a few vigorous puffs at his pipe. "Now I've given Mary as good advantages for learning as any girl in town, and she hasn't thrown them away; but if she didn't know how to work she'd be no daughter of mine. If I chose, I could keep more than one servant, but I don't; no more than I chose than my daughter should be a pale, spiritless creature, full of dyspepsia and all manner of fine-lady ailments, instead of the smiling, bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked lass she is. I did say that she should marry no lad that had been cursed with a rich father; but she's taken a foolish liking to you, and I'll tell you what I'll do: to work, and prove yourself to be a man; perfect yourself in some occupation—I don't care what, so it be honest; then come to me, and if the girl be willing, she is yours."

As the old man said this he deliberately knocked the ashes out of his pipe against one of the pillars of the porch where he was sitting, put it into his vest pocket, and went into the house.

Pretty Mary Blifkins was waiting to see her lover

down at the garden gate, their usual trysting-place. The smiling light faded from her eyes as she noticed his sober, discomfited look.

"Father means well," she said, as Luke told her the result of his application. "And I'm not sure but what he is about right," she resumed, after a thoughtful pause, "for it seems to me that every man, be he rich or poor, ought to have some occupation."

Then, as she noticed her lover's grave look, she added, softly:

"Never mind; I'll wait for you, Luke."

Luke Jordan suddenly disappeared from his accustomed haunts, much to the surprise of his gay associates. But, wherever he went, he carried with him in his exile these words, and which were like a tower of strength to his soul, "I'll wait for you, Luke!"

One pleasant, sunshiny morning, late in October, as Farmer Blifkins was propping up the grape-vine in his front garden, that threatened to break down with the weight of its luxuriant branches, a neat-looking cart drove up, from which Luke Jordan alighted with a quick, elastic spring, quite in contrast to his formerly easy, leisurely movements.

"Good morning, Mr. Blifkins. I understood that you wanted to buy some cider-barrils. I think I have some here that will just suit you."

"Whose make are they?" inquired the old man, as, opening the gate, he paused by the wagon.

"Mine," replied Luke, with an air of pardonable pride; "and I challenge any cooper to beat them."

Mr. Blifkins examined them critically one by one.

"They'll do," he said, coolly, as he set down the last of the lot. "What will you take for them?"

"What I asked you for six months ago to-day—your daughter, sir."

The rogish twinkle in the old man's eyes broadened into a smile.

"You've the right metal in you after all," he cried. "Come in, lad—come in. I shouldn't wonder if we made a trade, after all."

Nothing loth, Luke obeyed.

Mary tripped out into the entry. Her round, white arms were bared above the elbows, and bare traces of the flour she had been sifting.

Her dress was a neat gingham, over which was tied a blue checked apron; but she looked as winning and lovely as she always did wherever she was found.

She blushed and smiled as she saw Luke, and then, turning her eyes upon her father, waited, dutifully, to hear what he had to say.

The old man regarded his daughter for a moment with a peculiar look.

"Mary, this young man—mayhap you've seen him before—has brought me a lot of tubs and barrils, all of his own make—a right good article, too. He asks a good heavy price for 'em; but if you are willing to give it, well and good; and hark ye, my girl, whatever bargain you make your old father will ratify."

As Mr. Blifkins said this he considerably stepped out of the room, and we will follow his example. But the kind of bargain the young people made can readily be conjectured by the speedy wedding that followed.

Luke Jordan every year, on the anniversary of his marriage, delights his father-in-law by some specimen of the handicraft by which he won what he declares to be "the best and dearest wife in the world."

M. G. H.

**A MEDIEVAL SWORD.**—A sword of a very antique pattern, evidently a relic of the medieval period, was some days since drawn up in a net by a fisherman whilst fishing in the Suir, opposite the tower which, according to tradition, was built by Reginald the Dane, in the early part of the eleventh century. It is cross-hilted, very long and curved, and fully three inches in width, and from its great weight it must have been used with both hands, and intended to crash through merion and hauberk; in fact, no man could have wielded it with one hand unless, indeed, "there were giants in those days."

**THE ENGLISHMAN'S DRESS ABROAD.**—The French papers are complaining of the loose style of dress adopted by Englishmen. The *Figaro* says that a few years ago, when a man of elegant appearance, and irreproachably dressed, entered one of our theatres, people used to say "It is an Englishman." Now-a-days, when one remarks in the orchestra stalls a soft dirty hat and a red flannel shirt, one may, without fear of mistake, exclaim "It is an Englishman." Why and how has this change come to pass? It is a mystery. Xavier Aubrey, however, has found an explanation for this atrocious unceremoniousness and for these ignominious costumes. "The English," he says, "travel abroad to wear out their old clothes."





[A FATHER'S FEARS.]

## JENNIE.

"I've made my choice, auntie—what do you say to it?"

Mrs. Hunter looked intently at her niece, who sat before a small writing-desk, with a couple of open letters before her.

"That depends upon which of the two you have chosen," she replied.

"Why, Tom, of course!"

The lady's face grew serious.

"I'm sorry, Jennie," she said. "You are not suited to be a poor man's wife; you are too proud, too fond of your own ease and comfort. You had better have followed my advice and accepted Ralph Parker."

Jennie shook her head, showering her golden tresses in bright confusion over her white temples. "No, auntie—no. I despise Ralph Parker, and I wouldn't marry him if he were ten times richer than he is. I shall send back his diamonds, and tell him so too."

She closed the mother-of-pearl casket as she spoke with a lingering, longing glance at the gleaming gems it contained, adding, in a lower tone:

"But they are lovely—shouldn't I like to wear them to-night?"

Mrs. Hunter smiled, and, crossing the room, smoothed the girl's bright head as she said:

"You're a little simpleton, Jennie. You want Mr. Parker's diamonds—why not accept them, and shine resplendently to-night?"

But Jennie shook her curls with redoubled decision.

"Because I love Tom, auntie; and would sooner wear this poor little rose of his than own the queen's jewels."

The lady's cold eyes softened perceptibly as she looked down upon the girl's blushing, conscious face;

and then she turned towards the open casement with a dreamy, wistful gaze, her memory going back perhaps to an old rural home, far beyond the green hills that encircled the town wherein she dwelt—the home of her happy, simple girlhood. But Mrs. Hunter had sacrificed her love on the altar of Mammon, and she held it worse than folly to indulge in any such foolish regrets.

"I have always said, Jennie," she continued, gravely, "that I would let you have your own choice in regard to marriage. But think well of this. Mr. Rathburn is poor. As his wife you will be subject to all manner of privation, forced to live in stunted, economical style, that will not suit a girl reared as you have been. You love wealth, ease, and luxury; you are fond of fine apparel and costly jewels. Ralph Parker can give you all these—Tom Rathburn cannot."

"My decision is already made," said Jennie, resolutely. "I shall send back Mr. Parker's diamonds, and wear Tom's poor little rose to-night."

She took up the half-blown bud as she spoke, and set it in a vase, a warm, tender light glowing in her eyes.

Tom's letter lay open before her. A straightforward, manly declaration of love, and an offer of his heart and hand—a true heart, and a willing hand to shield her, and work for her for ever.

If she favoured his suit, she was to wear the white rose at her birth-night ball that night.

"Yes, I'll wear it," she murmured to herself as she folded the letter and put it in her pocket; "and, aunt, you'll oblige me by sending a servant to Palace Hill with Mr. Parker's diamonds."

"As you will, my dear," and, with a stately rustle of her costly silk, Mrs. Hunter swept from the room.

Jennie rang for her maid, and made ready for her birth-night ball; and when Mr. Tom Rathburn

entered the brilliant ball-room that night he was transported to the third heaven of delight by seeing his white rose-bud amid the delicate lace on her bosom.

A few months after this they were married, and started home, as happy and hopeful a couple as ever the sun shone on.

Tom was a lawyer by profession; but he was also equal to any undertaking; consequently, notwithstanding his poverty, he felt little or no concern in regard to his young wife's future. He meant to work so hard, and achieve such wonderful things; and, as for Jennie herself, she was all enthusiasm—never was a woman such a helpmate as she would be to Tom.

For the first six months of her wedded life they got on bravely; not that he made any great progress in his profession, but he had some little money on hand, and they rented a pretty cottage, with honey-suckle round the porch, and canaries in the windows; and Jennie wore the pretty clothes with which her aunt had provided her, and looked upon marrying a poor man as one of the most delicious things imaginable. But, after awhile, funds began to run low, and Tom saw that it was time to look around.

They gave up the cottage then and went into lodgings; but still he could get nothing to do—so they wandered from place to place, until the last pound was expended, and Jennie's wardrobe grew sorely in need of replenishing.

Just then a little baby came—a wee, dimpled little girl, as fresh as a spring rose-bud. Tom was the happiest, proudest man alive.

"Never fear, Jennie," he said, bravely; "let the law go to the dogs, I'll take to my saw and plane; they'll bring us bread at least."

He went to work like a man, as he was, coming home at night with a glow in his brown eyes that ought to have more than rewarded his wife for every privation she had to suffer; but Jennie had been tenderly reared, and her tastes were luxurious. She wanted a fine house, and soft apparel for herself and baby, and it hurt her pride to see Tom brought down to the level of a common labourer.

All these things vexed her, until she began to grow moody and discontented. The roses faded from her cheeks; she became careless about her household matters, and slovenly and untidy in her appearance.

When Tom came home, instead of the bright fire-side, and happy, smiling wife, that had once gladdened his heart, he found a disorderly house, and a gloomy, slovenly dressed woman, who was cross to her baby and cross to him. But not a complaint did the poor fellow utter.

Jennie was ill, he argued within himself—overworked, poor thing; he must try and do better for her—and he made his hammer ring with redoubled energy.

The second autumn after the baby's birth they had a pleasant little home, and a good, efficient girl for servant; but Jennie's discontent became more apparent every day.

She wished she was back in her old home, where she used to be so happy. Tom said not a word, but the warm glow faded from his brown eyes, and they wore an expression of wistful sorrow piteous to behold; but he worked all the harder, as if to conquer fortune by the power of his sturdy strokes.

One day, in the wane of autumn, a dreary, rainy day, matters came to a crisis. Margie, the hired girl, was ill, and all the household work, together with the care of the child, fell upon Jennie's hands. Tom did everything he could to help her.

"You won't have occasion to go outside the door, Jennie," he said, on starting, "and I'll be home early. You must do the best you can."

"Oh, it doesn't matter!" she replied, crossly. "I've got to work myself to death, anyhow, and I may as well do it outside as in."

He made no answer, but his brown eyes were full of unshed tears as he went out. Jennie felt that she had made an unwomanly answer the instant the words escaped her lips; but it merely served to increase her vexation. Everything she put her hands to seemed to go wrong with her. Margie grew worse, and baby was unusually active and troublesome; and, in addition, the wailing, easterly wind rushed down the chimney in sudden gusts, filling the room with smoke and ashes. She threw aside her broom and, duster in despair, and, sitting down in the midst of her untidy room, with her hair uncombed, and her dress in disorder, she burst into a passion of hysterical tears. Baby crept up to her feet, and essayed to climb into her lap; but she pushed her away crossly.

"Oh! go off, you troublesome little thing! I'm tired enough, without having you hanging round me!"

Thus repulsed, the little thing wandered off in

search of amusement, and finally settled herself at an open window, where she could catch the pouring rain-drops in her tiny hands. Unmindful of her occupation, and of everything but her own egotistic reflections, the young wife sat rocking herself to and fro before the smoking stove.

"What I might have been," she soliloquized, "and what I have come to—a common drudge! Yes, aunt was right; I ought not to have married a poor man. I might have had a splendid home and servants to wait upon me. Oh, dear! I wish I had chosen Ralph Parker's diamonds instead of poor Tom's rose!"

The baby, wrapped in nothing but her thin frock, leaned far out of the window, catching the swift drops as they fell. Still Jennie sat there, indulging in her morbid fancies and regrets. Just as the clock was on the stroke of ten a rapid step aroused her—Tom's step. He noticed the untidy room, and his wife's aspect and attitude in an instant. Jennie saw it, and rose to her feet, colouring with shame and anger.

"What's brought you back so soon?" she asked, sharply.

"I'm going to London," he replied, gravely. "I've heard of a good opening, and must see to it without delay; so I ran by to get a clean shirt, and say good-bye."

"You're all the time hearing of good openings," Jennie replied, pained that he was going away, and vexed that he had come upon her so suddenly; "but they don't seem to amount to much."

"So it seems; but I'll hope for better luck this time," he said, quietly, but with a heavy sigh. "Where's little birdie—sleep?"

Hearing his voice, the child clambered down, and came toddling to his side, her garments dripping, and her little hands and face blue with cold. He caught her up with a cry of dismay.

"Oh, Jennie! she'll be sure to have the croup—why didn't you look after her?"

"I can't look after everything—she's old enough to know better herself; there, you had little thing, take that."

Jennie put out her hand to slap the cold little cheek that lay against Tom's breast; but he looked up with something in his face that stopped her on the instant.

"Don't do anything you'll be sorry for by and by, Jennie," he said, tremulously; "you are not quite yourself this morning."

"No; and I never shall be myself again," she burst out, passionately, half beside herself with shame and anger at her own foolish temper, yet too proud to own it. "I'm harassed to death—and I wish I was in my grave."

Tom put his arm out to draw her towards him, but she glided from him and went into her bed-chamber. He could hear her sobbing, and the sound seemed to pierce his heart like a knife. Once or twice, while he was warming and comforting the child, a tear fell upon her golden head. When he had lulled her to sleep he placed her in her crib, with repeated kisses and caresses; and then, after making some change in his clothing, he went to the door of his wife's room.

"I must go now, Jennie," he said, opening it softly; "the train will be due in a few minutes. Come and say good-bye!"

Poor Jennie longed to throw herself in his arms and entreat him to forgive her, but her heart was too proud.

She sat quite still, her face averted, and her fingers busy with some sewing that lay on her lap.

"Good-bye, Tom," she said, coldly. "You'll be back soon, I suppose?"

"As soon as possible—to-morrow at the farthest; but, Jennie, come and kiss me, won't you? I might never come back, you know."

She laughed, and answered, lightly:

"Oh! don't be foolish, Tom. You'll be back. We've been married too long to act like lovers."

Tom turned away with a swift step; but she caught the look on his face as he went—and it was a look that would go with her to her dying day. For a moment or two she sat dumb, almost paralyzed, hoping that he would come back; then she started up and rushed to the door—but it was too late.

He was out of sight, and a few minutes later she heard the shrill cry of the whistle, and knew that he was gone.

The day went by drearily enough and the night closed in, the chill rain still dripping from the cottage eaves; Margie grew worse, and before bed-time little birdie had a high fever. With a deadly terror at her heart, Jennie called upon her nearest neighbour, Miss Pamela Stebbins. She came without delay, for she was a woman peculiarly kind of heart, though rough of speech.

"The child's been exposed," she began, the moment

her eyes rested upon the little sufferer, "took a sudden cold. She'll have a turn o' the croup 'fore morning; put on a pot o' water to heat, and warm some goose-grease. Got none? I thought as much—women o' your stamp never provide for the hour o' trouble. Now I'm an old maid, and never think o' havin' children, but I allers keep a bottleful on the third floor o' my pantry shelf. I'll go over myself an' get it directly. I ain't a woman to set down an' mope an' fret like you do, Jennie Rathburn. If you'd been 'tendin' to your business, an' not thinkin' about yourself, this child wouldn't a' had this attack, I know. I've had my eye on you for some time, an' intended to give you a good talkin' to, and I may as well do it now. Make that water boil—I want to bathe this child as soon as she wakes."

Jennie obeyed in silence, her heart was too full of bitter remorse and self-reproach for her lips to utter a single word, and Miss Pamela went on:

"I saw your husband this mornin'. I was at the station; took my golden pippin—an' a prime piece I got for 'em—they're scarce, you know. Well, I met your husband just as the train was starting, an' such a wee-begone face I never set eyes on. It's a shame, Jennie Rathburn, for you to treat that man as you do. 'Tis in everybody's mouth how he works and strives, and how unthankful an' discontented you are. You'll be sorry for it by and by, take my word for it."

"Oh, Miss Pamela!" Jennie burst out, with streaming tears, "I'm sorry for it now. If ever I see Tom's face again, I'll try and make up for it."

"It is to be hoped you will; but I don't know as you'll ever see his face again—you don't deserve to. You'll never know how to prize him till he's gone. I've seen women like you—you worry the poor man's life out now; but when he's gone, you'll break your heart over it."

Jennie sobbed as if her heart were already broken, and her lecturer went on:

"What a home you might make him! Why, bless my soul, if I had this house, I'd make it shine again. It only needs the will—one pair o' hands can work wonders; and then, instead of being all day in a dowdy frock, wi' your hair rough, an' your face all of a pucker, you ought to be as fresh as a rose-pink, a pretty young thing like you, an' always have a smile for your husband when he comes home. It's your duty. I'm an old maid, but I think any woman as has got a good husband, an' a baby, ain't got no right to mope—she ought to sing from morn to night."

Jennie raised her head, and made an effort to speak, but her sobbing choked her. Every word Miss Pamela had spoken had gone to her heart like a knife.

She arose and went to the bedside, and, kneeling down, took the hot little hand in hers.

"Oh, baby! little birdie!" she moaned, "if heaven will only spare you, and give me back my husband, I'll never complain again."

The night went by wearily, with wailing winds and dripping rain, and all through its tedious hours little birdie hung between life and death. But Miss Pamela worked bravely, and as the crimson dawn began to tinge the darkness the agonized mother arose from her knees with an overflowing heart. The child slept and would live.

Silently and swiftly she set herself to the work that awaited her. Tom would be home at ten o'clock and he must find his home a different one from that he had left. Somehow, as she worked, everything went well with her, and long before the hour of his arrival she had everything in order—the rooms clear of dust, the stove burnished like silver, and a snowy tablecloth awaiting the tempting breakfast that steamed upon the stove.

Dressed in a pretty morning frock, with her hair brushed out in short, shining curls, and a sweeter, tender light in her eyes than had ever brightened them before, she stood at the cottage door, listening with eager impatience for the whistle. She had refused to kiss Tom at parting, but she was ready to give him a thousand kisses on his return.

Ten o'clock came, but the whistle did not sound. Half-past ten—eleven—still no Tom. Her heart lay like a dead weight in her bosom, and her face grew white with unspoken terror.

Presently the old doctor came to look after Margie.

"Doctor," she cried, even before she had spoken about her baby, "has the train come in?"

"The train? Why, bless me, haven't you heard the news? A terrible collision—the whole train smashed, and nearly all killed or wounded!"

Jennie grew as white as death, and reeled back for an instant; then she steadied herself and caught his arm with a grasp like iron.

"Doctor," she whispered, "have you heard anything? Tell me quick. My husband was in that train!"

"Good heavens! What, Tom—Tom Rathburn?" "Yes, sir. He went to London yesterday, and was to be back to-day."

"But perhaps he changed his mind; maybe he didn't start. Let's hope for the best, child."

"No, no," she answered, wildly, "he started. He told me he'd come, and he never broke his word. Oh, Tom! Shall I never see him again?"

"Like as not," said Miss Pamela, sternly. "I told you how 'twould be. You didn't know how to value him till he's gone."

"Woman!" gasped the old doctor, seizing her by the arm, "have you no compassion? Don't you see she's almost dying?"

Jennie fell upon her knees beside the bed, and buried her face in her hands. Flushed by the noise, the baby awoke and opened her blue eyes.

"Mammy," she murmured, "has papa come, and brought birdie's shoes?"

"Oh, baby, baby," the poor mother sobbed, "he'll never come back to us again."

"Yes, he will, mammy," she replied, putting out her little hand, and stroking her mother's cheek. "He said he would come and bring birdie's shoes."

And with a sigh of content she turned over again and closed her eyes. Papa had never broken faith with her, and her little heart trusted him entirely. Jennie rose to her feet, and, going into her bed-chamber, put on her shawl and bonnet.

"I'm going, doctor," she said, as she came out; "there'll be trains running now."

"Yes. But, child, you don't know—"

"Yes, I do know. 'Tis a terrible sight; but Tom's there, and whether he's dead or alive I must be with him. Don't oppose me. I shall die if I don't go. Stay here till I return, and attend to the baby and Margie."

The sun was sloping down to the West, flooding all the tawny autumn woods and the far-extending lands with golden splendour, when Jennie Rathburn came in sight of her cottage on her return.

A tiresome journey, hours of sickening horror, and nothing accomplished. She had telegraphed to London, and ascertained, to a certainty, that Tom was in the doomed train; but among neither the living nor dead could he be found.

There were a few bodies so terribly mutilated that they could not be identified; and she had come to the conclusion that one of them must be her husband.

It was a terrible thought, but she had to bear it, and turn her back upon them, and go home to her child as night came on.

Standing in sight of her cottage, she seemed for the first time fully to realize what she had lost. Home and no husband! Never until that moment did she know how she had loved him. Should she never look upon his face again—never atone to him for all the sorrow she had caused him? She looked up towards the blue, serene sky with a yearning at her heart that must have called his soul back, if it were possible for those who have passed the bounds of time to make themselves manifest to their earthly companions.

Just then the cottage door opened, and a little figure glided out towards her with a wavering, doubtful step.

"Mammy," it called, when just within hearing.

"papa's come, and brought birdie the red shoes."

Jennie caught a glimpse of them, and dropped down where she stood without a word or a cry.

"I've killed her," Tom said, as he bore her into the cottage.

"No, you ain't," retorted Miss Pamela. "Lay her down here, she'll soon come to—women ain't killed easy."

Half an hour later, when Jennie Rathburn awoke, as from a terrible dream, she looked upon a cosy room and tempting supper-table—little birdie sitting before the stove, conscious of nothing but her red shoes, and her husband bending over the bed, his brown eyes full of anxious love.

"Tom," she said, softly, putting her arms around his neck. "Oh, Tom! can you ever forgive me, and love me again?"

And foolish Tom began to cry, like the simpleton he was, and to pet and caress her in an awkward manner, so happy that his reason seemed to have left him.

"Mush, Jennie!" he whispered, not knowing what else to say, "we're going to be so happy now. I've got a splendid place in town, and you shall have everything you want hereafter."

"I shall never want anything again, Tom," she replied, still holding him in her close embrace, "but you and baby. I've had my life-lesson—I'm fit to be a poor man's wife now."

"An' it's me as deserves the credit, if you are," said Miss Pamela as she went out to look after Margie.

F. G. J.



**PETITION TO CONTINUE THE PARIS EXHIBITION.**  
—A petition, signed by a great number of persons residing in Paris, has been presented to the Emperor Napoleon in favour of the maintenance of the Exhibition building in the Champ de Mars. The petitioners represent that before the building was erected 70,000 persons, residing on the eastern side of the Champ de Mars, were divided from the rest of Paris by a desert in the summer and a swamp in winter, and that the constant reviews and other military exercises which used to take place there effectually prevented any houses being built near the spot. They therefore beg that both the building and the railway connecting the Champ de Mars with the Chemin de Fer de Ceinture may be retained so as to facilitate communication with other parts of Paris and make the Champ de Mars habitable.

## NATHALIE LERMOND.

### CHAPTER VIII.

It was that cry which aroused Nathalie—that and the music, dying away suddenly. She stood at a door half open, her hand within Mr. St. Maur's arm, and the terrace lay before them, lighted brilliantly, and dotted here and there by the figure of some loiterer from the ball-room. Nathalie shivered as the draught of cool air struck her. Almost instantly a light mantle was thrown over her shoulders and Mr. St. Maur had drawn her out upon the terrace.

"Forgive me!" he said, "I was selfish—you have danced too long. I heard that waltz once in Andalusia; it seemed to me to-night like an old friend."

"It is cold here," answered Nathalie, still shivering, but now with an indefinable dread. "Let us go back."

His eyes filled with reproach.  
"I have waited for this moment all the evening, Nathalie. Do not begrudge it to me now."

"But I shall be missed," she said, coldly.  
"Have they not had you to themselves long enough?" said Mr. St. Maur. "I have shared in neither your smiles nor kind words to-night. Tell me what have I done, Nathalie?"

His eyes met hers in the moonlight. They had passed down the terrace by an urn of gray stone, wherein a pale green bed of mignonette was blowing, and filling with fragrance the night air. For years after, in Nathalie's memory, the odour of that flower was ever associated with some thought of Gilbert St. Maur.

"Indeed—" she began, softened.  
He came close up to her, and caught her two hands in his own. His haughty dark face was all aglow.

"I knew what you would say. Make me some reparation—listen to me now, Nathalie!"

Resistless under those eyes! even as she had been while drifting down the tide of that passionate waltz. She looked back across the terrace; but he held her hands, and she could not turn.

"I will conceal nothing from you," he went on, hurriedly; "why should I? You, of all others, must know me as I am. When Robert Hendee withheld away those broad acres in his prison, when I found that a young interloper, an unknown child, had come between me and that which would otherwise have been mine, I hated you, Nathalie—then, and for years after! There is but one step, they say, betwixt hate and love. When I saw you first upon the shore, on the night of your coming to Hendee, I loved you. All the hate, all the old rankling bitterness died a natural death. I loved you that night."

Nathalie, pale to the lips, and recoiling from him, made a quick gesture.

"Stop!" she cried, "pray do not go on!"  
"Will you not hear me?"

"I cannot!"

He was down at her feet, clinging to the hand she could not withdraw, as a drowning man clings to a last rope. The moonlight fell across his raven hair and his dark uplifted face, paler even than her own.

"Nathalie! Nathalie!" as he had called once before.  
Oh, how cold and pitiless her voice grew!

"Rise, I implore you!" she said. "You forget yourself, Mr. St. Maur. This is folly—worse yet, it is madness."

The white face flushed.

"And because of one fatal error am I to become an outcast for ever from love, Nathalie? Can your woman's heart condemn me to such a fate? Is there no hope for me? Do you not know that I love you as I never loved before, as I shall never love again?"

She drew her hand away with an effort, the marks of his violent pressure still upon it.

"Answer me!" he cried.

"I will, indeed. Not because of any previous

error in your life—not because of the past at all, do I tell you that your suit is vain; but because I do not love you, and could never love you, Mr. St. Maur."

"But I will teach you what love is, Nathalie. Become my wife—give me but your hand!"

She repelled him, drawing back till she stood beside the urn of mignonette, her mantle slipping down her glittering dress from her proud throat and shining arms.

"Love does not come with calling," she said.  
"And who has taught you that?" cried Mr. St. Maur.

It was her turn to flush now, angrily. He rose up and stood beside her.

"As sure as there is a heaven, you will one day be my wife, Nathalie! Remember it! Reject me now, if you will. I can well afford to wait for my triumph, even though it be far off."

"How dare you!" she cried.  
"I repeat it—you will yet be my wife."

She designed him but one look, haughtily indignant, then she turned to go.

Turned, only to pause again, as a laugh broke through the stillness close at her side—a low, wild and horrible laugh, coming from the other side of the gray stone urn.

Nathalie shrieked aloud, for there, looking down upon the scene, with one arm outstretched and a thin fore-finger pointed at her, stood a figure, white and wavering as the moonlight itself, half shrouded by lengths of dishevelled hair. That figure! With a slow curdling of blood in every vein, an icy sweat oozing from every pore, she recognized it.

"Good heavens!" cried Mr. St. Maur as he leaped forward.

It waved him back, slowly retreating from the urn. Nathalie, shutting it from her shuddering sight, sank to the damp earth, and hid her face; but not before she had heard a cry, involuntary it seemed, break from Mr. St. Maur's white lips:

"Hagar! Hagar!"  
Again that terrible laugh, answering the call in weird mockery.

He sprang past the prostrate girl with a smothered curse, and cleared the terrace. He was flying in pursuit—vain indeed—of that thin, beckoning figure, that, far in advance, waved him mockingly on, and fled as it waved him, to the sound of its own horrible mirth.

How long Nathalie lay upon the terrace she never knew. It was Mr. St. Maur's touch that aroused her. He bent and lifted her up.

"Nathalie!"  
She drew a long, shivering sigh, then looked around.

The moonlight shone brightly on the terrace, but they stood in its shimmer alone; he pale and haggard, as indeed he well might be.

"Nathalie, speak to me!" he said.  
"Oh, let us go!"

He pressed her hands in his own; they were like ice.

"This is a cruel jest—I swear it, Nathalie! Ghosts are obsolete. Do not look at me so. You are cold—you are trembling."

"Why does it haunt me?" she cried; "why me of all others? It may be a jest, but tell me who is the jester?"

His voice grew deep and imploring.

"Nathalie, leave this place; at best it is accursed. Come with me! We will go where its name will be heard no more—where it can be for ever forgotten in a new and a better life."

She waved him away, with a gesture that he could not mistake.

"Never mention this subject to me again," she said, calmly. "I have told you it is impossible."

He smiled cruelly.

"For a time, perhaps. Well, be it so. Your triumph first—mine after."

She passed him and went across the terrace, not once looking back. The hall door stood ajar, the hall itself was empty; she ran up the stairs to her own room.

Marie was asleep in an arm-chair. With a mute thanksgiving, Nathalie went up to the mirror, and looked aghast at the pale, agitated vision it presented. The night dew was clinging to her rich dress and to her hair. She proceeded to arrange both, wondering if they had missed her below. How should she go with such a pale face into the ball-room again? Oh, if the fête were only over!

Backwards and forwards across the floor she paced, her brain in a dizzy whirl, resolving one moment to abandon the place for ever—to restore to Mr. St. Maur all that he had lost through her. He was welcome to it, indeed. Home for her it could never be. In the very air she breathed there seemed to lurk a vague presence of evil.

Gradually this mood passed. Marie's steady breathing, the moonlight on the floor, the still dimness of the room, even the tick of her own watch on the toilet-table, acting by degrees upon heart and brain, recalled her to herself.

Then she became conscious of a noise in the hall, a clanging of the dressing-room doors, and that some of her guests must already be preparing to depart. Ruby Hendee met her on the stairs as she went down.

"Truant!" she cried, "where have you been hiding so long? I have searched the house over for you. The party from the Fields are going home. Cousin Gilbert is already gone."

Mrs. Delmore stood at the foot of the staircase, gathering up the last folds of her dress under her Indian shawl. She exclaimed as she saw Nathalie: "Oh, you are here at last, are you? What sent Mr. St. Maur off in such haste? We were sure you could tell us. Rose and Emily ride with Mr. Calvert and Alice and I go in the phaeton."

"But it is early yet," said Nathalie.

"That coachman is here a good hour before his time. Why did Mr. St. Maur run away so oddly? You are pale as any ghost. I am sure something has happened; and that reminds me that Rose says some of your servants have been seeing ghosts in the garden to-night, and are half scared to death."

John Calvert's tall figure interposed quickly betwixt Nathalie and her tormentor.

"Mrs. Delmore, allow me to adjust your shawl. Are you sure you will be quite warm? Pardon me if I suggest a brief adieu with Miss Lermont—the horses are growing restive."

"But Emily has not obtained her mantle yet."

He went and brought it from the dressing-room.

"And I am sure I have dropped my handkerchief somewhere."

"My dear madam, you have it in your hand."

He went with them to the carriage.

"Oh, pray hold the horses, Mr. Calvert!" cried Rose Galbraith. "They are plunging already; we shall be sure to be upset."

A moment's time to them, an eternity to him. He disengaged himself at last, and, hurrying back, found Nathalie lingering still, just as he had left her, at the foot of the stairs. He stretched out his hand.

"Thank you," she murmured, almost involuntarily.

He would not understand.

"Good-night and good-bye," he said.

She gave him her still white fingers.

"May I come again?" asked John Calvert.

No answer, but the white fingers lay passive in his own.

"I asked you once to trust me. Have you forgotten it?" he asked.

"No."

He dropped her hand.

"If you have need of me before I come, I shall know."

Other words, perhaps, were trembling on his tongue, but he checked them. The next moment he had leaped into the carriage beside Rose Galbraith. That was his farewell.

With the fast-waning weeks a change, hard to define, because so subtle and still, had come to the inmates of Hendee Hall. It was noised abroad that the old house was to be closed again.

Perhaps it was too quiet for the young heiress, the country people said. At least, she was going away.

Truth to tell, it was a lonely place, to say nothing of the strange, uncanny stories that of late had got abroad in the country relating to the once-famed ancestral seat of its proudest family. To deal briefly with the matter, Hendee Hall was to be either sold or deserted—Miss Lermont, of course, knew best. If sold, surely who but Mr. St. Maur, the master of the Fields, would be its purchaser?

And yet that could hardly be. It was a valuable estate, and everybody knew he was terribly in debt.

The graceless spendthrift! Time would never change him. Then too there was evidently a breach now existing between the two houses. The black horse that for weeks he had spurred into white foam almost daily along the beach road, they never saw there now.

He never rode that way, never came to the Hall—why and wherefore no one, unless it was Miss Lermont, knew. So the house grew dark and silent again.

No more gay young people came from the Fields to lunch and make merry in the drawing-rooms; and it was too late in the season for visitors from town.

Then too the servants had assumed a singular way of keeping the doors bolted and barred at all times, and going about the house with scared faces, screaming when they encountered each other unexpectedly in dark passages.

Even Mrs. Roberts would occasionally be found glancing back over her shoulder with a queer look when she threaded the upper galleries or the lower hall after twilight—demonstrations that were, in a manner, causeless, for nothing had been seen or heard, in or about the house, to alarm anyone since the night of Miss Lermond's fête.

It was an afternoon late in October that Mrs. Roberts, sitting at her sewing in the west wing, looked out upon the garden walks, full of fallen leaves, and nodded behind her spectacles to the drowsy, monotonous tick of the clock in the hall.

The window was open, and on a low sofa near it, curled up among some crimson pillows, lay Ruby Hendes, thinner, paler than when last we saw her, with her golden curls falling about her temples, whose blue veins showed in clear, delicate tracery. It was from that window that she had watched Mr. St. Maur first coming to the Hall.

Perhaps that was why she had grown so fond of sitting there, watching feverishly, through the deepening shades of autumn, the gray sweep of the road where his horse's hoofs were heard no more, and one white tower, rising far off behind some leafless tree-tops; for it was that which marked the Fields.

Mrs. Roberts had suggested port-wine and a change of air, the physician a sea-voyage, Nathalie rest, and Ruby, growing more listless and languid with each succeeding day, had shaken her golden head and smiled sadly at them all. Whatever her malady was it was beyond their divining.

"Miss Ruby," said the old housekeeper, starting suddenly from a doze, "what can have come across Mr. St. Maur? Johnson says the gay young folks have all left the Fields, and he is living there like a hermit, never going out now but on his own acres and to Coltonleigh."

The pale, listless face among the crimson pillows changed in a moment.

"Coltonleigh," she repeated, looking at Mrs. Roberts; "why does he go there?"

"Johnson didn't know," said Mrs. Roberts. "Also Mackenzie lives at Coltonleigh, or, at least, she used to, and Alsie was a clever lady's-maid here ten years ago, in the time of Master Robert and that poor, beautiful lady that's dead and gone now—heaven rest her! Mr. St. Maur is not the man, though, to be seeking his old servants, and, moreover, Alsie ran away and left us without word or warning the night of her mistress's murder."

Ruby played nervously with the tassels of her pillows.

"I'm sure," continued Mrs. Roberts, drawing a long breath, "there's been trouble of some kind, else Mr. St. Maur would come here as he used to—some affront betwixt him and Nathalie, though I have had other thoughts about them, too."

"It is not that," answered Ruby.

"Well, to be sure, I don't know; Gilbert's likely to marry again, and long ago the country people used to gossip about a match between them. I am free to confess myself—"

What, Ruby was left to guess. A quick step in the hall, the sweeping of a dress, warned Mrs. Roberts to say no more. Nathalie stood upon the threshold, her shawl thrown carelessly about her, and her hat in her hand.

"I am going down to the shore," she said. "Do not wait tea for me, Mrs. Roberts."

"Not alone, Miss Nathalie?"

"No; Barbara will be my guide. I am going to find the family of that poor Mackenzie, who was lost with the fishing-boats last night. He has left a widow and children, and an old mother, Barbara says."

"Bless you, it's a mile down the beach, Miss Nathalie!" cried Mrs. Roberts.

"Yes; we shall not reach home till twilight. Ruby, dear, are you asleep?"

To all appearance she was, for there was no answer. Her face was half hidden in the pillows. Miss Lermond bent over and kissed her pale cheek. Then she went away very softly, closing the door after her.

It was a lovely afternoon. A purple haze lay on the sea. Some fishers' children were at play in the sand, dotted with salt, shallow pools and bunches of seaweed flung up with the morning tide.

The path to the Mackenzie cottage led round the cliffs a good mile, as Mrs. Roberts had said. A squall little dwelling, hiding among the sand-hills, and flanked with racks of fish drying in the sun. A bare-footed girl, mending nets at the door, ran in to announce the visitors.

"This was Alsie Mackenzie's home," whispered Barbara as they went up the path to the door. "You'll not mention it, I'm sure, but often and often it's been said that Alsie knew more of the murder of Miss Hagar than she cared to tell. She ran away, and was gone for months after, you see, and when she came back to Coltonleigh she set up, like any

grand folks, in a great house, where she lives all alone by herself, too proud now for any old friends to cross her threshold. Hugh Mackenzie's daughter, good gracious me!"

It was the old mother that met them in the doorway.

"Here's the mistress herself come to see you," said Barbara. "Ah, Mother Mackenzie, it was a sorry thing, poor Sandy's drowning, and all in sight of home, too!"

"Oh, I'll ne'er forget the day," murmured the old woman. "Sandy was the last of six braw sons. It's evil doing that brings down curses, Barbara; there's been ill-luck on the house ever since Alsie ran away that night ten years ago. Ye mind it?"

"Yes," answered Barbara.

"Alsie's wark—sair wark!" she kept on repeating.

Having listened patiently to the story of their sorrow and poverty, with the little children slyly creeping up to her, lured at last by her sweet voice and tender eyes, and, emptying at parting her purse into the good-wife's hands—a mean gift; and Nathalie had played the Lady Bountiful often in such homes—she rose up from beside the peat fire to go.

"Is she," whispered the old woman, clinging to Barbara's cloak, "is she the leddy, Barbara, that Mr. St. Maur has been a wooing, as the fisher-wives tell?"

Barbara tossed her head.

"How should I know?"

"Oh, heaven bless her! He's a cruel man—a bad man is Mr. St. Maur."

"Hist!" said Barbara, fearful lest her mistress should hear.

"And no good will come out of it, my girl!"

Barbara shut the door and hurried after her mistress. The sun was just setting in the West as they crossed the beach—higher up on the shingles now, for the tide was coming in round the cliffs—and the shore lay flushed in an imperial purple light under his slow decline. Nathalie paused a moment against an isolated rock, and looked upon the sea. Her face was sad and thoughtful.

"Do not wait," she said to Barbara. "I will follow you soon."

She leaned back against the rock, with her hat in her hand, the south wind blowing back the hair from her clear, white forehead. Somewhere across the bay, mellow and clear, a bell was sounding. A herd of spotted kine wound homeward, sleek and slow, in the marshes below her, the herd-boy whistling loudly. "For ever! For ever!" moaned the wilful sea at her feet.

Presently the purple of sunset began to fade from the sand; the distant bell had ceased its ringing, and the wind grew louder and colder in the hollows of the rocks. Nathalie, after watching the broken ring of a new moon hanging just above the low, hazy coast line, drew her shawl around her, and turned to go.

A heavy foot sounded upon the sand at her side. She heard the heavy neigh of a horse—turned back—and saw Gilbert St. Maur standing before her, dark and immovable as the rocks themselves, with the bridle flung across his arm. He lifted his cap.

"We meet again, Miss Lermond."

She bowed coldly.

"I have been at the Mackenzie cottage. They told me of your visit, and that you were walking home across the shore."

Nathalie drew herself up.

"And you followed me?"

"Pardon me. Could I help it? Am I more than human?" said Mr. St. Maur.

"Let me pass now—I am going home."

His arm, like a bar of iron, stretched forth, and barred her progress.

"One moment, Nathalie! Hear me as you would hear John Calvert. I have tried to obey you—I have been for days in banishment—I have tried to forget this hopeless passion. As well might this shore forget the sea!"

Nathalie shrank back from the glance of his dark eyes. Her tone, almost involuntarily, thrilled with a touch of womanly pity.

"Is it wise or well, Mr. St. Maur, to thus continue in pressing a subject that, apart from being distasteful to me, is worse than profitless to yourself?"

He smiled a dark, bitter smile.

"Profitless it shall not be! Will is destiny. Do you think that aught earthly can ever conquer mine? I tell you, girl, I will follow you to the ends of the earth, if need be—to hell itself even!"

Nathalie looked across the wide, gray beach, with a thrill of terror.

The fisher's children had gone from the sands, the herd-boy and his herd had disappeared—she stood alone there with that desperate man.

"Nathalie, are you mad or blind that your heart

does not respond to me?" he cried. "Who will ever love you as I love you? Who will be your veriest slave? I ask no love in return—I ask but for your hand. Give it me!"

"Never!" she answered.

"Never!" he said, derisively. "It will be before the winter snow melts from this shore!"

There was a sound of footsteps close at hand, a cry from Nathalie, and someone had leaped down from the rock above them betwixt the two. A hand was laid on Mr. St. Maur's shoulder, and John Calvert stood looking at him from under his knit brows.

"What is this?" he said, sternly.

Mr. St. Maur, flushing to the forehead, shook off his hand.

"Eavesdropper!" he hissed.

"What are you doing here?" repeated Mr. Calvert, quite calm.

Mr. St. Maur would have thrust him back, but he remained firm, immovable as the solid rock. He lifted the loaded end of his riding-whip.

There was no word of threat or defiance from either, but the movement was well understood. Mr. Calvert extended his right hand, and, wrenching the whip from the other's grasp, snapped it in twain. He flung the pieces upon the sand.

"Turn your horse's head from this beach, Mr. St. Maur. Miss Lermond, I see, has no wish to prolong this interview farther. So deep a game as yours should be played more warily."

Mr. St. Maur grew livid to the lips.

"You are a bold man, John Calvert, to thus come between me and mine. Trust me, you shall repent it—we will meet again."

"Where and whenever you please," answered Mr. Calvert, carelessly. "Miss Lermond, I came in search of you—it is too cold for you to remain longer here."

Mr. St. Maur leaped into his saddle.

"Farewell, Nathalie!" he leaned back to say. "For the present I wish you joy—the future will take care of itself. Farewell!"

One dark glance flung over his shoulder, and the next moment he was galloping off down the beach, the thunder of his horse's hoofs making the rocks resound with echoes.

John Calvert stood looking into Nathalie's eyes. She had given him no word of welcome, but now she extended her hand, her cheek crimsoning slowly beneath his gaze. He drew her shawl around her with a tender touch.

"I would have spared you this, Nathalie. Tell me—I have the right to know—have you ever loved that man?"

Her face grew proud and distant.

"Loved him?" she answered, coldly. "Never!"

"You would not have been his wife?"

"No!"

A streak of tawny red crossed his dark cheek. He lifted her face, and searched it a moment with his falcon eyes.

"I came back to ask you. Oh, Nathalie, Nathalie, could you be my wife? Could you love me?"

Swiftly leaped up the red blood to that beautiful face. Then John Calvert opened his arms with a great cry, and she lay upon his breast.

"My darling—my little Nathalie!" he said. "I have wanted you so long—so many years!"

The same story, lived over every day—old as the hills, but always new! Crossed upon his shoulder, her white hands lay passive and eloquent; his passionate kisses rained upon her lips; and, under the light of the young autumn moon, they stood, happy lovers confessed.

As they walked home, through the still paths bathed in moonlight, Mr. Calvert paused one moment beside the wishing-spring. The air was filled with the soft splash of its waters. A few dead leaves floated lazily in the dark basin. He looked down into it, pressing the little hand which lay in his own.

"Nathalie," he whispered, his fine eyes filling with a lustrous light, "do you remember that corridor in the old jail, and the poor debtor, and the little child that opened its door to him, and, as heaven hears me, Nathalie, made him all that he is to-day?"

Her brown eyes grew humid.

"Yes, I remember," she replied.

"And," he said, playfully, "do you remember, too, how I asked you to trust me, one morning, standing here? Do not forget that, Nathalie."

"I will not."

They little dreamed how soon and how utterly that promise was to be broken. He bade her good-night at the gate.

"Little Nathalie," he said, turning her proud, drooping face to the moonlight, "let me look at you once more. Are you quite sure this is no dream—that I shall not awake to-morrow to find my



treasure slipped from my hold? I am half afraid, Nathalie."

She broke, smiling, from his embrace, and went on through the fallen leaves of the garden, hearing his receding footsteps and the clang of the gate behind him, her proud heart full to overflowing with the thoughts of what it had won.

To the sounds of the night-wind surging through the shutters, full of the voices of the sea, Nathalie slept that night—a happy sleep, haunted by no dreams of evil.

Merciful, indeed, is that veil which shuts the future from our view.

Her head nestled down in the pillow like a child's; and, sleeping, she dreamed of John Calvert's eyes, not knowing that below, in the darkness under the weird poplar-trees, half the night long, a saddled horse, with flakes of undried foam on his shining black flanks, stood pawing the earth impatiently, while on the terrace above, with sullen eyes fixed on her casement alone, a tall figure, muffled in a horseman's cloak, went pacing on and on through the midnight, casting, at every turn of his stealthy steps, a long, threatening shadow across the yellow moonlight—a shadow dark as that of death.

## CHAPTER IX.

LOVING and beloved! Life perfected—its bees all humming, its roses all in bloom! Three magic words—are they not? Sooner or later to the strongest of us comes this season of delirium, this fleeting summer of delights, when the world seems made alone for happy lovers; when its sunlight is more than earthly—and before our idol has donned mortal habiliments, or the sun drunk up the dew of our passion-flowers.

Poets rave of this time; fools sneer, but we of the sad brows and the gray hair look back upon it always with moistened eyes, wondering why love is always pictured joyous and dower crowned.

Better far to welcome it in fear and trembling—it is the parent of pain, as well as rapture—the fountain-head of tears and prayer.

November glided by, wild and woeful, hiding her wasted face in a stormy veil of snow and sleet; and yet so golden a month—one so richly fraught with pure sweetness and sunlight, had never dawned before for Nathalie Lermond.

Oh, the delicious moments of watching at the casement for his coming, with blush-roses in her hair, and such sweet, bright eyes—she, the self-possessed, the unimpressible belle!—the thrill of rapture when his horse's hoofs first sounded in the garden below!—the long hours passed at his side, eloquent with that sweetness and tenderness which never comes to any heart but once. Life stood crowned and completed—its feast of honey and wine spread.

And John Calvert?

Love works many wonders. He was no longer the grave man of the world, fighting foremost in ambition's list, but an humble, passionate lover—a willing captive in a lady's bower, searching for his heaven in a pair of brown eyes.

It was a happy change to Hendee Hall. Gradually the gloom, the haunting presence of evil which had clung to the place for weeks, began to pass before the exorcism of love.

Even the servants caught the contagion, and Mrs. Roberts forgot the backward glance in the dark passages, and donned her best cap whenever Mr. Calvert came to tea, and hinted vaguely to the housemaids of an approaching wedding. Smooth enough this course of "over true love" seemed flowing.

Suns rose, and stars set. The shadows had departed from Nathalie's gate, and from the dark master of the Fields came neither word nor sign. She had not seen him since that night upon the shore. And so November passed away.

The beach had put on its first winding-sheet of snow. It was a night in winter, gray and cold and starless.

The poplars tossed their skeleton arms, beckoning weirdly to each other in the wild north wind. Below, the sullen bay boomed ceaselessly on the rocks, and the frozen corgage of the ships in the offing rattled and groaned intermittently, and the red eye of the lighthouse lamp glared across the white and savage bar. In the west room the curtains were but half drawn, and a soft, mellow lamp-light shone through, across the terrace, and the desolate garden, and revealed the fresh track of Mr. Calvert's horse up the carriage way, and the gate standing ajar through which he had passed.

Under a hedge of holly, directly facing this light, a path had been worn in the snow by impatient feet. In its shadow a man, muffled to the eyes and carrying a riding-whip in his hand, stood with his back to the window, looking gloomily out at that horse's

track in the snow and the dark and writhing poplars beyond. A greyhound was crouching at his feet, and shivering in the shelter of the holly. And this man! With his dark face, his black, relentless eyes, his thin red lips—you would have known him anywhere—was Mr. St. Maur.

Suddenly he muttered something through his set teeth, and, turning on his heel, like one fully resolved upon some purpose, confronted the lighted window and the room beyond.

Every object there was as plainly visible to this outward spectator as if he had been within its walls; and, with a long, eager, fascinated gaze, Mr. St. Maur, pausing in his track, as if rooted thereto, took in the scene.

What was it he saw? A room, sumptuous in its appointments, and filled with shifting tints of crimson and emerald, paintings on the walls, a coal fire burning in the grate.

Standing on the hearth, with his hands crossed behind him, an old, familiar attitude, John Calvert was talking to the other and only remaining figure in the room—the young heiress of Hendee, sitting on a low ottoman at his feet.

Did she dream, looking up so shyly into John Calvert's face, of the ravishing picture she made, and for whose eyes she was making it—basilisk eyes, that watched her from their covert, as a wild creature watches its prey?

Her dress, composed of some rich fabric, swept the floor around her in warm and heavy folds. It had white, loose sleeves, through which the marble arms appeared, white as snow, and a broad belt of gold, with a clustered clasp of seed-pearls, shining like stars in the mellow firelight. Her hands lay crossed upon her lap, one above the other. He could see the flash of the diamond ring on the slender finger of the left one—John Calvert's diamond.

It has been said that all women are beautiful when they love.

However that may be, certain it is that to Mr. St. Maur Nathalie's face had never looked so perfect, so maddening in its beauty, as when he saw it uplifted on this night, tender and smiling, to the man she loved.

He shrank back into the shadow, and watched them a long time.

Presently, Mr. Calvert went up to the low ottoman, and, taking the little hand that wore this ring, held it for a moment in his own broad palm. Her lids drooped, even as if he could see the flush stealing into her cheek; then John Calvert bent, and, with a gesture indecisively tender and reverent, pressed back from her low forehead his shining masses of half-loosed hair, and left a kiss upon it.

An oath fell from Mr. St. Maur's lips. He started so fiercely that the bound leaped up from the shelter of the hedge, and came whining to his side. Mr. St. Maur struck him sharply with his riding-whip, and, leaping through the holly thicket, climbed up to the terrace, and, passing that window, went on to the next, guided by a sound that he could not well mistake.

It was the plaintive music of Ruby's piano, and Ruby's voice mingling with it, fainter and sadder than when he had heard it last, but unspeakably sweet.

The shutter was closed. Mr. St. Maur opened it softly and tapped upon the pane. The music ceased. A faint stir within, and then a step crossed the floor, a white hand drew back the curtain, and Ruby's pale face, with its golden curls, looked out, startled and surprised.

With a quick cry she recognized him. He threw up the window, and leaped into the room, closing it quickly after him. They were alone together. He turned to her, and held out his hand, smiling.

"Little Ruby, did I frighten you?" he said.

She laid her hand in his.

"No," she said, quietly, "I thought it might possibly be you."

"I am sure you did! Miss Lermond may banish me from the Hall, but not from you, Ruby. I heard your voice in the garden, and—followed it. *Mabelle's* cousin, have you missed me?"

She answered only with a vivid flush, that died away, and left her paler than before.

"Gilbert," she said, "have you quarrelled with Miss Lermond?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Yes—no; that is, I am under the ban, I suppose; but let that pass. Ruby, are you ill?"

"No," she said, hastily. "I am quite strong now. I shall go away with Nathalie."

"Away? Where?" he questioned.

"Do you not know?" she said.

He shook his head.

"Nathalie will be married in the spring, and leave Hendee. I shall go with her. I am very glad—I have learned to love her so!"

It was well that his face was in the shade at that

moment, else his secret would never have escaped those eyes—eyes that seemed reading him to the very core, sharp with a woman's instinct, perhaps, a woman's jealousy.

"Married?" he repeated, carelessly. "That is news, indeed. Hendee to be left desolate again? Pray, who may her happy bridegroom elect be?"

"You should know," she answered, calmly. "He is an old friend of yours—Mr. Calvert."

"Calvert? Indeed! Is he stopping in the village?"

"Yes."

She dropped one hand on the low mantelpiece, and leaned her head upon it. How slender she had grown—almost unearthly looked her fragile loveliness. Some spark of compassion ought to have stirred that heart of his—any emotion would have been preferable to his utter and hopeless indifference.

"He returns to town to-morrow," Ruby said, referring to Mr. Calvert, "to make ready for his marriage."

"And where are they going?" asked Mr. St. Maur. "Where are you going, Ruby?"

Did he think to deceive her by this shallow subterfuge—this false interest in herself? She answered, feverishly:

"To Italy. They are to live abroad for a time."

"Good heavens!" broke with passionate emphasis from the lips of Mr. St. Maur.

Their eyes met; his fell. She went up to him, and laid her hand on his arm.

"Cousin Gilbert," she said, calmly, "do you love her so very much then?"

"Love her, Ruby? Are you mad?"

"Not mad nor blind."

He made a quick gesture.

"Do you think I have not had enough of love for one lifetime? The very word has grown to be a mockery to me now. Foolish Ruby!"

Still she was not convinced. He saw it. She stood with a sad, irresolute face, looking at him.

"Have you seen Nathalie to-night?" she said. "Does she know you are here?"

"No."

Ruby coloured slightly.

"You will pardon me," she began, "but—but—it is not right that you should remain here without her knowledge. She would think it very strange. I will call her, or I will send for Mrs. Roberts."

"By no means!" he said, with a quick start. "I did not come to see Nathalie or Mrs. Roberts, but yourself. Do not betray me, Ruby."

She made no promise—he needed none. Her face satisfied him.

"You must go now, Gilbert—indeed you must!" she cried.

"I will. Only one moment more. Ruby, Miss Lermond loves you?"

He had taken her hand within his; he was looking down into her fair, childish face.

"Yes," she answered.

"I must come to Hendee again—I must, little cousin; yet I cannot without her consent. Ruby, will you make my peace with Miss Lermond?"

Where was the girl's better angel that she did not refuse him?

"I will try," she answered, hurriedly. "Hark! they are bringing Mr. Calvert's horse!"

Mr. St. Maur pressed her white hands to his lips.

"A thousand thanks!" he cried as he threw up the window. "Fare well, *ma belle cousine*. Do not forget your promise!"

He knew well enough that she would not. Half way across the garden he turned, and saw her small face pressed to the pane, looking after him in the darkness.

It vanished as he looked, and Mr. St. Maur shrugged his shoulders, and, calling to his hound, started to go.

The heavy hall door was just closing. He heard the quick snorting of a horse—the voice of John Calvert speaking to the groom. Then the horse and rider turned into the carriage way, and came slowly down past the holly hedge—past the deep shadow, wherein Mr. St. Maur stood concealed, Mr. Calvert humming softly to himself as he rode.

Quick as a flash of thought, at the first sound of that voice, the hound, Castor, sprang up from the snow, and, bounding through the holly hedge, leaped, fawning, up to Calvert's stirrup, with a bark of joyful recognition. He drew his rein, with a look of surprise.

"What! Castor, is this you, old fellow?" he said, bending down to pat the glossy head of the poor brute. "It is a long day since you and I met."

Castor licked the gloved hand eagerly, rushed to the hedge and back again, barking gleefully all the time.

Mr. St. Maur stood like a block of marble, suppressing an oath between his angry teeth. Some lurking suspicion perhaps was in his rival's mind, for Mr. St. Maur saw a keen glance cast around in the dark-

ness, a narrow scrutiny taken of the footprints in the snow, but the night baffled him.

He started on again down the carriage way, through the gate, and out into the high road; and, leaping and fawning at his horse's head, Castor the hound followed him.

A bitter smile crossed Mr. St. Maur's lip. His hand was raised to the inner folds of his cloak, only to fall again. He was not there for revenge that night. Let him ride on unharmed.

"Even my dog," he said, as he gained the road, and saw the horseman's shadow far away against the horizon, "deserts me for this man. We were friends once—he has done me good service. What a pity that he should ever have crossed my path!"

(To be continued.)

## FACETIÆ.

THEY are boring for petroleum in Italy. Why don't they try the greasy lakes of Greece?

PATIENCE FOR DOCTORS.—Young doctors should not grumble because they find it difficult to get into practice. They will be certain to succeed if they only have patients.

DUMB SPEECH.—"What!" exclaimed an Irishman to a gentleman who was threatening to chastise his dog for barking incessantly; "what! would ye bate the poor dumb animal for speakin' out?"

### DIDN'T LIKE WIDOWERS.

In endeavouring to take the census for the government the officers occasionally meet with such difficulties as to well-nigh deprive them of their senses. The following colloquy is said to have taken place somewhere between an official and an Irishwoman:

"How many male members have you in your family?"

"Niver a one."

"When were you married?"

"The day Pat Doyle left Tipperary for Ameriky. Ah, well I mind it. A sunshiner day never gilded the sky of ould Ireland."

"What was the condition of your husband before marriage?"

"Divil a man more miserable. He said if I didn't give him a promise within two weeks, he'd blow his brains out with a crowbar."

"Was he at the time of your marriage a widower or a bachelor?"

"A which! A widower did you say? Ah, now go away wid your nonsense. Is it the likes of me that would take up with a second-hand husband? Do I look like the wife of a widower? All legs and consumption, like a sick turkey! A widower! May I be blessed if I'd not rather live an ould maid, and bring up a family on battermilk and pratties!"

A FASTIDIOUS YOUNG LADY.—A music-seller was lately overpowered by a fastidious young lady, who wanted to purchase "Mr. Hood's song of a gentleman's undergarment?"

AN ARTFUL DOG.—A certain old lady, whenever she hires a servant man, asks, "Can you whistle?" On being asked the reason of this curious question she says that she always makes him whistle when he goes to draw the ale until he returns, thus securing him from tasting.

A GOOD STOMACH REQUIRED.—It is related that a clerk of a rural church in England recently made the following announcement to the congregation:—"You are desired to attend a meeting in the vestry, at four o'clock, to consider on the means of 'eating the church and digesting other matters.'"

EXTREMELY PARTICULAR.—In an Auckland (New Zealand) paper a girl advertised for a situation to take charge of a laundry or dairy. She can cook, understands housekeeping, and adds: "None but a respectable mistress, who wishes to leave her servant in uninterrupted discharge of her duties, need apply."

AN AWEWARD ADMISSION.—A bashful young man escorted an equally bashful young lady. As they approached the dwelling of the damsel she said, entreatingly, "Jehiel, don't tell anyone you bea'd me home." "Sally," said he, emphatically, "don't you mind, I'm as much ashamed of it as you."

TOM CATS.—During the progress of the war I was sitting one day in the office of Abth & Co.'s wharf-boat at Calcutta, Illinois. At that time a tax was collected on all goods shipped south by private parties, and it was necessary that duplicate invoices of shipments should be furnished to the collector before the permits could be issued. The ignorance of this fact by many shippers frequently caused them much annoyance, and invoices were oftentimes made out with great haste, in order to secure ship-

ment by boats on the eve of departure. A sutler, with a lot of stores, had made out a hasty list of his stock, and gave it to one of the youngest clerks on the boat to copy out in due form. The boy worked away down the list, but suddenly he stopped and electrified the whole office by exclaiming, in a voice of undisguised amazement—"What the dickens is that fellow going to do with four boxes of Tom Cats?" An incredulous laugh from the other clerks was the reply, but the boy pointed triumphantly to the list, exclaiming, "That's what it is—T-o-m C-a-t-s—Tom Cats, if I know how to read." The entrance of the sutler at that moment explained the mystery. "Why, confound it!" said he, "that means four boxes Tomato Catsup!—Don't you understand abbreviations?" The roar which followed can be imagined.

RURAL SENTIMENTALITY.—Young Husband: "MY dear Juliette! How matter-of-fact you are! When I expatiate on the gambols of the sheep, and lambs, you talk of 'mint sauce,' and the fowls with their innocent young, you talk of omelette and 'tender spring chicken.' Do pray think less of the stomach, and more of nature!"

### ONE REASON FOR MARRYING.

A bachelor friend of ours is about getting married for no other reason than to have someone to take care of him when he is ill. The treatment he received at a fashionable boarding-house, the last time he had the ague, has cured him not only of single life, but single bedsteads and single mattresses. He ordered, he says, the servants to bring him some gruel on Monday morning, but which he never got till Wednesday afternoon. During his confinement not a single soul visited him save the young gentleman who cleaned the knives; he came not for the purpose of consolation, but to inform him that "Missus would be much obliged if Mr. Skeesicks would do his shaking on a chair, so as not to get the bedstead apart." This was the feather that broke Skeesicks's bachelorship. From that moment he resolved to connect his fortunes with a piece of dimity.

AN HUMBLE BUT GOOD COMPARISON.—"Oh! doctor, I feel so queery like; I feel just like a boiled onion," exclaimed a poor sick woman. "How so?" remarked her medical adviser. "Why," answered she, casting a furtive glance at the questioner, "because I have lost nearly all my strength." The doctor prescribed accordingly.

### LOGIC.

Philanthropist: "You see the fishes mingle, white and black, red and brown; all happily together in one family—Mankind should take them as an example!"

Old Coder: "Yes, but they are stupid enough to bite at any bait, and all mankind don't do so."

ABOUT A WATERFALL.—A Missouri young lady wore her newly purchased "fizzle" head-dress to bed, and on being suddenly awakened and finding the said "fizzle" on her pillow, she was greatly alarmed, taking the same for a negro's head. She screamed, grasped the "fizzle," and fainted. Restoratives—a light and a momentary survey—explained the mystery.

### A GENTLE HINT.

Visitor: "What is the meaning of the furniture all packed up?"

Victim: "Going to move right off! Wife has received letters from two of her country relations that they are coming next week to make us a protracted visit! This is the only way to get rid of them—have tried every other means! Am tired of keeping that kind of hotel."

GREAT IS SCIENCE.—"Zhentlemens," said a French savant to his audience, "ze volition of an animal is like zat of ze telegraph. For example, when ze whale is harpooned, ze nerve instantly telegraphs ze brain, 'Harpoon in tail,' and ze brain immediately right away telegraphs back, 'Zherk tail and upset ze boat,' and the tail obey like a flash. Ah, zhentlemens, a great ting is science—one very great t'ing!"

AN ABSENT EYE.—The mayor of a small village of France, having occasion to give a passport to a distinguished personage in his neighbourhood, who was blind of an eye, was in great embarrassment on coming to the description of his person. Fearful of offending the good man, he adopted the following ingenious expedient for avoiding the mention of his deformity. He wrote, "Black eyes, one of which is absent."

THE AUCTIONEER AND HIS CLIENT.—A wealthy man, who owns an estate, recently became dissatisfied with it, determined to have another, and instructed an auctioneer, famous for his descriptive powers, to advertise it in the papers at private sale, but to conceal the location, telling persons to apply at his office. In a few days the gentleman came

upon the advertisement, was pleased with the account of the place, showed it to his wife, and the two concluded it was just what they wanted, and that they would secure it at once. So he went to the office of the auctioneer and told him that the place he had advertised was such a one as he desired, and he would purchase it. The auctioneer burst into a laugh and told him that that was the description of his own house, where he was then living. He read the advertisement again, pondered over the "grassy slopes," "beautiful vistas," "smooth lawn," &c., and broke out, "Is it possible? Well, auctioneer, make out my bill for advertising and expenses, for, by George, I wouldn't sell the place now for three times what it cost me!"

COMPLET.—When a Paris omnibus is full the word "complet" is placed on the rear of the stage. An American in Paris was anxious to see all the sights, and concluded that he would in part accomplish his purpose by going about in the various omnibuses. He states, however, that he was never able to get to "Complet," and adds, that "the place must possess superior attractions, though not spoken of in the guide-book, for every omnibus going there was always full."

QUICKNESS AT THE BAR.—A barrister on the northern circuit, passing by rail from town to town, rushed to the bar for bitter beer and biscuit. "You have plenty of time," said Gannymede in crinolite, repressing the perilous haste with which he took his refreshment, "you have eight minutes." "Oh," said he, "if I have plenty of time, there's no need to choke myself." "Why, sir," was the philosophic reply, "there's no need to choke yourself if you haven't time." "Too much for me, that girl," muttered our Templar, and vanished.

### SCENE IN PARIS.

First French Citizen: "What! you turned Turk?"

Second Ditto: "For the present. Seeing how popular the Sultan and his suite have been, I thought to profit by my Turkish costume, that I bought last season for a masquerade, and find it quite a success; but as it's against the religion to take wine, I will return to Christianity again."

A GLASS EYE.—An action was lately brought in a French court against a lady for the price of a glass eye, that she had ordered expressly to fit her, but refused to take when finished. She defended her own cause, and desired the court to observe her hair. "It is false," said she, "but it looks well, and keeps my head warm. My teeth, too, are false," said she; "but they, too, look well, and what is better, they enable me to masticate my food. But this eye," continued she, angrily, "is not half the use of my wig and artificial teeth, for I cannot see out of it a bit; and so saying she dashed the eye indignantly on the floor of the court."

### AN ECCENTRIC LEGACY.

A man who recently died at Leicester bequeathed a share of his property to his nephews, on the following conditions:

"As my nephews are fond of indulging themselves in bed in the morning, and as I wish them to prove to the satisfaction of my executors that they have got out of bed in the morning, and either employed themselves in business or taken exercise in the open air, from five to eight o'clock every morning from the 5th of April to the 10th of October, being three hours each day, and from seven to nine o'clock in the morning from the 5th of April to the 10th of October, being two hours every morning; this is to be done for some years, during the first seven years to the satisfaction of my executors, who may excuse them in case of illness, but the task must be made up when they are well; and if they will not do this they shall not receive any share of my property. Temperance makes the faculties clear, and exercise makes them vigorous. It is temperance and exercise that can alone insure the fittest state for mental and bodily exertion."

### FRIVOLOCITY.

Belle of the Juveniles: "Oh, Lady Charlotte, do let us stay a little longer!"

Lady Charlotte: "But, my dear, you're not sent for yet!"

Belle: "Ah, but I mean when we are sent for!"

—Punch.

DYING AND DUE-FOUNTING.—Two women, named Cooke and Silk, were sentenced in Dublin for conspiring to defraud the Royal Liver Society by a forged death certificate. Six months' imprisonment is rather an unusual consequence of a Liver complaint, but in this case a perfectly natural one.—Punch.

A LEGACY FOR NEW BROOMS.—Lord Brougham has issued what he considers his death-bed warning, to the effect that the political future of the country depends on our making a clean sweep of bribery and corruption at elections. A very pretty piece of clean-



sweeping indeed for the old broom to leave the new ones!—*Punch*.

A LAST RESOURCE.

*Our little Wife (whose husband persists in remaining in town, when she is dying to go to the sea):* "I say, dear, you won't mind having your books and papers and things moved into the drawing-room, will you? The sweeps are coming to-morrow, and the carpets have to be taken up, and everything turned out for a fortnight!"—*Punch*.

A PROFESSIONAL VIEW OF THINGS.—Our doctor, who goes every autumn to Brighton, invariably makes the same remark when he first sees the sea—the saline mixture as before.—*Punch*.

REMARKABLE PHENOMENON.—It appears to have escaped the notice of the scientific that at a little town in Cambridgeshire, marked on the maps as Newmarket, the year is longer than in any other place in the world, the inhabitants now for many consecutive autumns having had a Second October.—*Punch*.

A RAW NOTION.

Diner: "Waiter, I told you to bring me new potatoes!"

Waiter: "Werry sorry, sir—but our new potatoes is just done, sir!"

Diner: "Well, then, bring 'em! Do you think I wanted them raw?"—*Pun*.

NOT BY HOOK.—We are in a position to state that, in commemoration of the late Pan-Anglican Synod's-as-good-as-a-wink, the episcopal palace on the banks of the Thames will in future be known as Crook-haven.—*Pun*.

"SHAMPOOING CHARLIE WAS HIS NAME."

Hairdresser: "Well, my little gentleman, and how would you like your hair cut?"

Charlie: "Oh, like papa's, please—with a little round hole at the top." [Unutterable bliss of parent who sits within hearing].—*Pun*.

GOING, A SACRIFICE!

We fancy the old adage, "If you want anything done, do it yourself," is the only possible answer the following advertisement can be expected to receive:

"SERVANT-OF-ALL-WORK WANTED for a widow lady and her daughter, in a small cottage thirteen miles from London. She must be honest, truthful, active, civil, clean, and an early riser. Wages 3*l.* a year. Address, stating name and address of last mistress, Miss B—, O—, Surrey."

If the widow lady and her daughter cannot afford more than three pounds a year for such a model servant, we think they had better undertake the place between them. Honesty, truth, activity, civility, cleanliness, and early-rising all expected at somewhere about a penny three farthings a day. Come, we'll be generous—we don't mind engaging the lot at three farthings a head per diem, and shall think we have made a very keen bargain then.—*Pun*.

STATISTICS.

ALCOHOL IN WINE, SPIRITS, AND BEER.—Brandy, gin, rum, and whisky contain from 40 to 55 per cent. of absolute alcohol; port and sherry from 19 to 25 per cent.; claret, and other light wines of France and Germany, about 12 per cent.; strong ale, 10; bitter beer, 5 to 7; and small beer, 1 per cent.

THE number of Cornish engines reported for the past month is 23, which consumed 1,447 tons of coal, and lifted 11.5 million tons of water ten fathoms high. The following engines exceeded the average duty of 52,600,000 lb., lifted one foot high by the consumption of 112 lb. of coal:—Chiverton, Cargoll, Chiverton Moor, Cook's Kitchen, Great North Downs, Great Work, North Reskear, Providence, South Wheel Frances, West Chiverton, West Wheel Seton, and Wheel Seton.

THE BUTTER TRADE.—The consumption of Irish butter in London is not 20 per cent. of what it was formerly. The quality of Irish butter has improved, but fresh competitors have entered the field, and in the north, where Ireland has hitherto held possession, French butters are gaining ground. Thus the countries from which the chief supplies were received in each of the years 1863, 1864, and 1865 were as follows: Holland, 295,418 cwt.; 336,224, and 345,926; France, 185,098, 168,020, and 353,115 cwt.; Hamburg, 128,089, 128,906, and 120,162 cwt.; United States, 173,301, 142,872, and 63,216 cwt.; Belgium, 75,227, 81,575, and 70,619 cwt.; Denmark, 42,904, 62,323, and 65,555 cwt. According to the Dutch Government, the quantities exported were 11,609,614 gallons in 1863, 13,351,897 in 1864, and 14,203,236 in 1865. The Dutch have always had the greater share of the London market, but within

a few years a trade has sprung up with France which surpasses that of all other countries. The agricultural statistics show that Ireland is tending towards a dairy country, and hence the great importance of directing attention to the manufacture of butter in a proper manner. The area of cereals continues to diminish, while that of meadow and clover increases. Thus, of cereals the number of acres cultivated were 2,652,780 in 1859, 2,409,898 in 1863, and 2,115,137 in 1867; while the number of acres of meadow and clover were 1,487,111 in 1859, 1,560,688 in 1863, and 1,658,451 in 1867. The quantity of butter imported, as shown by the Government returns, was 887,566 cwt. in 1858, 992,772 in 1861, and 1,165,081 in 1866. The quantities exported were 113,946 cwt. in 1858, 102,603 in 1861, and 79,201 in 1865. Of this latter quantity 14,656 cwt. were foreign and colonial, and 64,535 cwt. were British and Irish. The quantities retained for home consumption averaged per head of population as follows: 3.93 lb. in 1862, 4.02 lb. in 1865, and 4.36 lb. in 1866.

MORNING GLORY.

GAY Morning glory—oh, glory of the morning!  
Fair dower that waketh  
Fore all the rest, and drest  
In beauteous robes of purple, white and blue,  
Shineth with pearly dew  
Upon thy breast;  
Not kings, in all thy glory,  
Equal thy transitory  
Splendours that fade away  
Ere noon of day:  
Ah, well from thee might they take timely warning!  
Quaint Morning glory—oh, glory of the morning!  
I love to look on thee  
In all thy pagantry,  
And muse upon thy grace, much marvelling why  
Things loveliest 'neath the sky  
Most transient be:  
The brightest and the sweetest  
Wither methinks the fleetest,  
Scarce issuing to birth  
Ere gone from earth:  
And, musing thus, I rue the world take warning.

Fair Morning glory—oh, glory of the morning!  
When first the birds do sing,  
And from the nest take wing,  
Thou hear'st, ere yet awake thy sister-flowers,  
Through the fresh, fragrant hours,  
Their carols ring;  
And, ere to hunt for honey  
Through regions warm and sunny,  
From home he forth the bee,  
By sure degrees  
Thou shrinkest, and thou bid'st thy rare adorning.  
Blithe Morning glory—oh, glory of the morning!  
Thou cheerest everywhere  
The misty morning air,  
And offerest to the poor as to the rich  
An orient beauty which  
They all may share:  
The little children love thee,  
And oft in wreaths have wore thee:  
Yet poets, most of all,  
Thee darling call,  
And heed the most the moral of thy warning,  
And love thee best—best praise thy rich adorning.  
W. L. S.

GEMS.

A MAN'S own good-breeding is the best security against other people's ill manners.  
The only way to pass for anything is to be something.

LIVE before marriage is romance—after that, reality.

He who gains the victory over great insults is often overpowered by the smallest; so it is with our sorrows.

We should more seldom take offence at each other if we looked oftener at the why than the what.

The road ambition travels is too narrow for friendship, too crooked for love, too rugged for honesty, and too dark for science.

MANY a philosopher who thought he had an exact knowledge of the whole human race has been miserably cheated in the choice of a wife.

A FETTER BRIDGE ON THE RHINE.—An account of the inauguration of a flying bridge over the Rhine, in the commune of Rhinan, has been given. The mayor of that place had invited a number of French

officials and Baden burgomasters, and in the course of the proceedings he made a speech, in which the following passage occurs: "May this bridge add to the prosperity of material interests on both banks of the Rhine, and to spread on both sides the great ideas of liberty, law, and truth! May it above all serve to make both peoples recognize that their mutual happiness can only be founded on peace and reciprocal respect, and not on a bilid national hate! It is not only good neighbourhood, but confraternity of the two peoples we desire; the fruit of that fraternization of all people will be the extension of civilization and intellectual culture, and to give liberty and well-being to all."

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

RIPENING GREEN TOMATOES.—Tomatoes though green will, if of good size, ripen fully if they are cut with some part of the stem of the plant, and hung up in a viney or other dry warm house.

CLEANING AQUARIA.—Take a small bit of coarse brown paper, and apply it to the side of the aquarium, and rub it freely over the surface. If the aquarium is large, roll up a mass of the paper into a ball, and scrub with this. This method entirely removes all conservoid growth, and has the merit of not scratching the glass.—*L*.

TAR VARNISH FOR WOOD AND IRON.—One gallon of coal tar, half a pint of spirits of turpentine, 2 oz. of oil of vitriol, stirred, and laid on like paint. Mix with a piece of wood or stick the tar and vitriol, and then add the turpentine, and apply it with a brush. Mix no more than you can use at once, and then apply it as it becomes thick.

LAUREL AS AN INSECT DESTROYER.—A good insect killer is bruised laurel leaves, or a decoction of them. Most persons living in the country have laurels, or can at any rate procure a barrowful of shoots from some neighbour. Well, this load of shoots must be well bruised and then placed in the green-house; the strong perfume of the laurel will effectually kill every insect.

MISCELLANEOUS.

SILK IN FRANCE.—Silk is produced in France as an article of commerce from worms feeding on the leaves of the oak. An acre of trees produces from 19 lb. to 24 lb. of silk.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE.—There are rumours that Buckingham Palace is being fitted up for the residence of the Prince of Wales. Marlborough House, it is said, is far too small for his Royal Highness, and an enlarged house and an increased stipend will be the great feature of the new Parliament to the future Sovereign of Britain.

DISSIMILARITY OF SIGNATURES.—Prof. Peirce, of the United States, says that the chances that any two signatures will be written precisely alike without design by different individuals are as 1 to 2,686,000,000,000,000,000,000. He made the calculation on the occasion of being called in as an "expert" in a very important will case recently tried.

GOLD AND SILVER IN FRANCE.—The total annual value of the gold and silver manufacture in France is set down at 3,835,600*l.* The number of manufacturers is 1,250, and 29,500 persons find employment in the trade. Since 1855 the masters and workmen have formed themselves into a common association for the amicable adjustment of their respective interests.

THE CANNON OF THE EMPEROR.—The small cannon invented by the Emperor Napoleon, and with which experiments were recently made at Meudon, fires twenty shots in a minute, and two men suffice for the transport of the arm, the carriage, the ammunition, &c. Lastly these guns were tried against a clump of trees at 1,500 metres (nearly an English mile). The trees were mowed down in a few minutes, like a cornfield by a steam mowing machine.

DEATH OF H.R. MAJESTY'S ENGRAVER.—Mr. Henry Thomas Ryall, historical engraver to Her Majesty, died recently at his residence at Cookham, near Maidenhead. Mr. Ryall began his career as an engraver by the production of "Lodge's Portraits," the work by which he was perhaps best known. Subsequently he engraved Sir William Ross's miniature portraits of the Queen and Prince Consort, also Sir George Hayter's coronation picture, and Beilke's picture of the Princess Royal's Christening. These semi-public commissions procured for him the title of Historical Engraver to Her Majesty.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. W.—We answered this correspondent at length in a recent number of THE LONDON READER.

CAROLINE—Vol. IX. of THE LONDON READER commenced with No. 708, May 4.

JULIA—The letters "A. E. I." so often used on jewellery are derived from a Greek term, signifying constancy.

A. FORDICE—*Evraia* is the plural form of *evraim*, meaning the faults of a printer or author, inserted in the beginning or end of a book.

E. C.—The French phrase "*Un homme de cabinet*" means a studious man, and "*Il ne sait ni A ni B*," he is quite illiterate.

LAURA F.—A good recipe for removing freckles is to put 1 oz. of alum and 1 oz. of lemon juice into a pint of rose water; mix well together, and then apply.

W. B.—The terms and conditions upon which boys are received into the office of attorneys vary according to circumstances as various as each respective case may be.

G. S. R.—No agreement in writing having been signed, you are not compelled to take the rooms. The landlord must rest contented with the forfeiture of the deposit.

W. H. D.—It would be scarcely etiquette to address a brother's wife's sister "My Dear Sister." The style in which you should address her depends upon your intimacy with the lady.

JACK FROST—Your course is simple indeed. Go to Doctors' Commons and obtain a copy of the will, which will cost you from 1s. 6d. upwards, according to the number of folios.

J. E. H.—1. Any stationer will supply you with drawing-pen. 2. We have repeatedly stated that we make no charge for the insertion of communications in these columns.

MARION—You are correct; the phrase, "Right, according to Cocker," originated out of the reputation for mathematical correctness gained by Edward Cocker, the arithmetician, who was born in 1631, and died in 1687.

MARK—The salary of the chief magistrate of the metropolitan police courts is 1,600; the other magistrates receive 1,300. The chief clerks 300, to 500; other clerks 75 to 300.

A YOUNG MOTHER—The more an infant sleeps naturally when it is first born the better. If in perfect health, the child, during the first two or three months, will sleep almost incessantly, awakening only when it requires food.

JAFREY—The liquid named phosphoric acid is perfectly harmless, and will, if rubbed upon the face or hands in a dark room, afford much amusement, presenting the appearance of a mask or gauntlet of fire.

INQUIRER—To be enabled to sue in *forma pauperis* it is necessary to swear that you are not worth five pounds, except your wearing apparel; an attorney and counsel will then be assigned you by the court without fee.

MACFARLANE—The best red ink may be made by taking two grains of good carmine, half an ounce of rain water, twenty drops of water of ammonia, add a little gum arabic; this will make a beautiful ruling-ink for ledgers and bank purposes.

M. HART—A King or Queen regnant of England is at liberty to marry a subject. The Royal Marriage Act of George III. prohibits any other member of the Royal Family of England, descended from the body of George II., to marry without the consent of the Sovereign.

JON SUTTON asks the respective heights of Salisbury and St. Paul's Cathedral. The former is in length 474 ft.; width at transept, 210 ft.; height of spire, 404 ft. The latter is in length 510 ft.; width, 250 ft.; height to the dome, 370 ft.; the ascent to the ball is by 616 steps; cost 747,974.

KATHLEEN—We feel flattered at our fair correspondent's appreciation of our tales. In reply to her question we must however state that it is our endeavour to please all readers. How we succeed in that effort "Kathleen" herself answers when she tells us that while she prefers the contained stories her father prefers those that are short.

JENNY—To dye feathers blue mix two pennyworth of oil of vitriol with the same quantity of powdered indigo, and let it stand for a day or two, then shake it well and put a tablespoonful of the mixture into a quart of boiling water, place the feathers in it, and let them simmer for a few minutes.

A. BATLEY—Rotterdam Fair lasts for about a fortnight, and people resort to it from a great distance, both on pleasure and business. It is something like an English festival, with its shows and booths, music and dancing, and all the merriment that once enlivened Greenwich Fair. The booths are

fitted up after the fashion of London coffee-houses, divided into compartments, where the visitors enjoy themselves by eating a sort of sweet fritter, sprinkled with sugar, made by women who sit outside making and baking them. The North Frisian girls resort there, but not for the sole purpose of making purchases; their chief object is to procure husbands, for which these blue-eyed and ruddy-faced damsels bedeck themselves in costly and ornamental head-dresses, the value of which varies from 16s. to 20s.; some cost as much as 100l. They are composed of gold plates sitting close to the head, covered with a thin net and lace cap, and sometimes, in case they die without being married, these head-dresses are sold to enable them to be interred respectably.

A CONSTANT READER is an impatient, if not a careless reader, for we daily answered his question in our last number. Our readers should keep in mind that in consequence of the number of communications we receive weekly and our vast circulation it is imperative that a month, or at least three weeks, should elapse before we can print our answers.

HILDA.—1. Any newswriter will supply you with the journal you name. 2. The duties of a companion to a lady depend entirely upon the tastes and requirements of the employer, and probably her station in life. In high life they are to accompany her in her drives, to read to her, play, sing, or take a hand at cards—in fact, to act the part of a poor relation living *à la mode*.

PADDY CANNY writes foolishly and at random, if not incoherently. By calling in the aid of some intelligent friend he will discover that the answer in question is correct; we gave the pronunciation and not the orthography of the phrase. "Paddy" must be a careless reader indeed not to have observed the words "is pronounced as / written."

N. J. E. K.—1. The strings of a guitar are six in number. The three first, E B and G, are, like the gut strings of the violin, called the treble, and the other three, which are of gut or silk, and wound with silver wire, constitute the bass. All the strings are tuned by fourths, except the third, which is tuned one-third below the second. 2. Handwriting would be good without the flourishes appended to some of the letters.

## PRESS UP.

There was a time—ah, me! not long ago!  
When thou didst walk beside me in the vale;  
Together, then, we watched the roses blow,  
Or listened to the nightingale's sad tale;  
While in the radiant distance seemed to lie  
A happy future shrouded for you and I.

Then wouldst beguile to future days a name,  
Whose sound should echo through the realms of space,  
And startle all the nations with its fame.  
While men should praise its brilliancy to trace;  
Within thy bosom glows a living fire,  
That urges thee for ever to aspire.

Press on! aspire! win the wished-for goal,  
And on its summit let thyself repose;  
Then shalt see earthly clouds beneath thee roll,  
While the firmament with heavenly splendours glows;  
And none shall greet thee with a prouder gaze,  
Than she who presses now these lines to trace. I. C.

ALFRED THE GREAT.—1. Try Goldsmith's abridgement of the History of England; it is very cheap, and to be obtained of any bookseller. 2. After the preliminary examination takes place as clerk until of age be attained. 3. There is no fixed premium on articles. This varies according to circumstances and arrangement. You may be article at any age, but cannot be admitted an attorney under twenty-one. 4. Handwriting good.

A NEWSPAPER READER.—1. It is not true, as so frequently and ignorantly asserted, that Abyssinia is an unknown and unexplored country. From 1400 the land has been visited and explored by Europeans. There are many books in English literature upon the subject, and maps also. The best of the latter is undoubtedly that so recently published, under authority, by Wyld. 2. The King or Emperor Theodorus is fifty-two years of age. He has been twice married and has two sons.

LITTLE LILY.—1. Undoubtedly want of exercise and a habit of lounging may have retarded your growth; certainly they could not have tended to increase either your stature or your health. 2. Without doubt walking exercises, short of fatigue, and frequent tepid bathing will promote your general health; and, although we do not think that after the age of eighteen it will increase your physical height, such habits will assuredly improve both your mental and bodily vigour.

PEARL LEIGH.—1. To make a good depilatory take 2 oz. of pearlash, 16 oz. of fresh burnt lime, and 3 oz. of sulphur of potash, reduce them to a fine powder in a mortar, then put it into closely corked phials. The part must be first bathed with warm water, then a little of the powder made into a paste must be immediately applied; should it irritate the skin, wash it off with warm water or vinegar. 2. Handwriting pretty and ladylike, but would be improved by being less slanting.

FLORA.—The following is a good way to clean looking-glasses: Take a newspaper, fold it small, dip it in a basin of clean cold water, when thoroughly wet squeeze it as you would a sponge, then rub it hard all over the surface of the glass, taking care that it is not so wet as to run down in streams—in fact, the paper should only be thoroughly moistened; let it remain for a few minutes, then rub the glass over again with a piece of dry paper till it looks clear and bright.

AN INVALID.—The Royal Hospital for Incurables is situated at West Hill, Putney Heath. It was instituted in 1854. It is not merely a charity for the pauper class, although persons having no homes are admitted as inmates. Persons having homes, but without means, receive pensions of 20l. per annum. The members are elected in the months of May and November. You should apply to the secretary of the Royal Hospital for Incurables, 11, Finsbury, who will send you a form of application and other particulars.

ROSE.—1. A good sauce for the improvement of gravies is a small quantity of Worcestershire sauce added to double the amount of catsup, and carry sufficient to cover the top of a threepenny-piece; this will impart a delicious flavour. 2. An excellent sauce for cold meat or poultry may be made by putting a tablespoonful of chopped onions into a stewpan with one of Chilly vinegar, one of common vinegar, three

of water, two of mushroom catsup, two of Harvey's sauce, and a pint of melted butter; let it simmer until it becomes sufficiently thick to adhere to the back of the spoon, then add half a teaspoonful of moist sugar. 3. Handwriting not bad, but evinces too much carelessness, which, if avoided, would greatly add to its improvement.

M. J. J.—Take our advice, by no means attempt to "stop" your teeth; by so doing you will cause yourself unnecessary pain, and in the course of a few years lose your teeth. For the toothache—that is, to alleviate the pain—use a little camphorated chloroform; it is soothing and not injurious. Your better plan would be to have your teeth examined by a dentist; if you cannot afford to consult a respectable practitioner, you will find a surgeon dentist at any hospital, who will readily give you advice gratis.

NATURALIST.—You are right; the wilds of Abyssinia will be found to be one of the grandest hunting-fields in the world. The animals indigenous to the climate may be thus enumerated: The lion, leopard, black leopard, lynx, hyena, jackal, fox, wild dog, badger, otter, elephant, rhinoceros, ostrich, giraffe, gazelle, buffalo, rhinoceros, koodoo, oryx, hippopotamus, harems deer, guinea fowl, crocodile, ibex, grouse, quail, cliff-springers, partridge, buffalo, mouton, quail, boar-constrictor, gazelle, wild fowl, monkeys, hares, snipe, wild boar, rabbits, plover.

MUGGINS.—To brown *pan-barris* take 1 oz. each of aquafortis and sweet spirits of nitre, 4 oz. of blue vitriol, 2 oz. of distillate of muriatic acid, dissolve in 1 quart of water; the barrel must be first polished and cleaned off with whiting to remove the oil, then rub some of the liquid on well, and let it remain until the next day, then rub it off with a hard brush, the process to be repeated if necessary; the barrel must be next washed in soda-water, and afterwards well rinsed in clean water, then polished either with a burnisher or with a brush and beeswax.

LEONARD.—It is rather difficult to define what constitutes a gentleman, but the following are some of the characteristics: No gentleman will ever boast of a superior education in the presence of one who has not had the same privileges as himself; he will never boast of good health before an invalid, or speak of good fortune to one bent down under misfortune's heavy stroke; he will strive to attain nobleness of soul and magnanimity of character. Truthfulness, integrity and politeness, mark a gentleman—truthfulness in action as well as word; he must also possess a good temper.

CHARLES NEWCASTLE, twenty, medium height, dark, and with 100l. per annum.

WILLIE SETON and CHARLIE GEORGE, with good incomes, both dark, tall, and handsome. Respondents must be fair and ladylike; money no object.

MARINA, eighteen, tall, fair, and ladylike. Respondent must be tall, dark, and gentlemanly, between twenty and thirty; a resident in or near Kent preferred.

FANNY, between seventeen and eighteen, 4 ft. 10 in., brown hair, hazel eyes, fair, and a cheerful disposition. Respondent must be of medium height and fond of home.

LIZZY P., twenty-two, fair, light blue eyes, brown hair rather pretty, and domesticated. Respondent must be a lady.

ELIZA S., seventeen, 5 ft. 6 in., dark, gray eyes, dark hair, good looking, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be tall, with dark hair and eyes, and fond of home.

ELIAS D.—y., nineteen, 5 ft. 4 in., brown hair, hazel eyes, fair complexion, and will bring money when twenty-one. Respondent must be tall, dark, and in a good situation.

A. M. P., eighteen, tall and slight, fair, brown hair, hazel eyes, cheerful disposition, and business-like. Respondent must be fond of home, kind and affectionate; a member of the Church of England preferred.

M. D., twenty-two, 6 ft. 1 in., light hair, fair, with 550l. per annum. Respondent must be an Englishman about twenty, tall, dark, stout, good looking, domesticated, and with a taste for music.

JANET H., eighteen, 5 ft. 1 in., fair, light hair, gray eyes, good looking, fond of music, thoroughly domesticated, and will have money on her wedding-day. Respondent must be tall, with dark hair and eyes.

LILY and JULIA, "Lily" seventeen, medium height, light hair, blue eyes, and good looking. "Julia" sixteen, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, and good looking. Respondents must be about seventeen or eighteen, tall, dark, and have good salaries.

HANNAH and LAURA, "Hannah" twenty-two, medium height, fair, and blue eyes; respondent must be tall and fair; whiskers indispensable. "Laura" eighteen, tall, ladylike, dark eyes and hair; respondent must be tall, dark, handsome, and have a moustache.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

PARK CAREW is responded to by—"Lily Maeland," well educated, tall, and dark.

W. A. T. by—"A. A. M." who thinks she would suit; has no money, but a cheerful and affectionate heart.

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